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CORRESPONDENCE

BY OTHER MEANS

IN THEIR ARTICLE ON THE INDIAN Ocean tsunami's "real cause," Daniel Sarewitz and Roger A. Pielke Jr. did a good job of severing the perceived connection between global warming and all natural disasters ("Rising Tide," January 17). They failed, however, to provide the simplest and most damaging critique to the argument that the Indian Ocean tragedy is somehow linked to global warming: Tsunamis have practically nothing to do with the atmosphere. They usually result from undersea seismic activity, though collapsing landforms and glaciers can cause them, too. A 9.0 earthquake off the coast of Sumatra will produce a tsunami regardless of the atmospheric temperature or composition.

DANIEL J. SMITH
Iowa City, Iowa

UNION BUSTER

YOUR JANUARY 17 EDITORIAL, "Labor Pains," correctly points out the decline in union membership between 1979 and 2003 (down from 23 to 12.5 percent among all employees, and even more marked in the private sector alone—union representation of private-sector workers declined from 22 percent in 1979 to 8.2 percent in 2003). But you fail to point out that, from its peak in 1953 (at 32.5 percent; 35.7 percent in the private sector), union membership had already begun to fall by the late '70s. Indeed, between 1975 and 1979, it fell as rapidly as it has declined since—by about 1 percent per year. Representation of private-sector workers fell by 13.2 percent between 1953 and 1978 and by 13.8 percent between 1979 and 2003—two roughly 25-year periods. Clearly, a change in the attitudes of presidents, of their appointees to the National Labor Relations Board, and of the courts is a reason for this decline, but it is not the whole story.

DONALD A. COFFIN
Associate Professor of Economics
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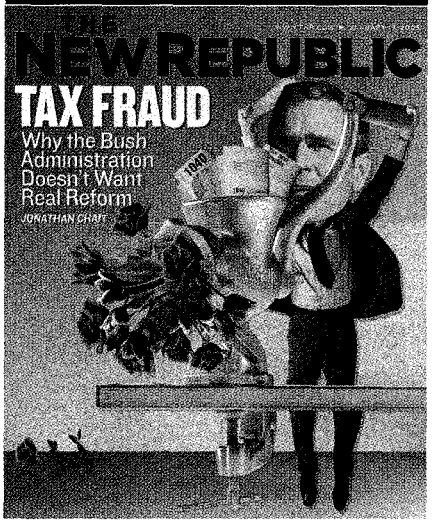
SOFT TARGETS

OF ALL THE REPUBLICANS TO CITE in demonstrating GOP isolationism, Peter Beinart picks Sonny Callahan and Dick Armey—two *retired* congressmen ("Distant Shores," January 17). What's more, Callahan was no major party leader. No mention of Bill Frist, who goes on medical missions to Africa each year; nor of Dick Lugar and Chuck Hagel, the two highest-ranking Republicans on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and well-known internationalists; nor of Henry Hyde (chairman of the House International Relations Committee), Mitch McConnell (chairman of the Senate Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee), or even Tom DeLay (fanatical supporter of Israel). Maybe, in response to one damning Callahan quote from 1995, I should hold up a random quote from former House Armed Services Committee Chairman Ron Dellums as an example of Democratic naïveté on national security issues. But that would be partisanship, not analysis.

DAVID MORGENSTERN
Washington, D.C.

AFTER THE TSUNAMI



CONTRA IRAN

IN QUOTING MY BEWILDERMENT AS to what policy Washington should adopt to prevent Iran's theocrats from obtaining nuclear weapons, Franklin Foer neglects to mention that I was endeavoring to avoid a discussion of the merits of various policy options because I was waiting for the Committee on the Present Danger (CDP), with which I am associated, to complete a white paper on the issue ("Identity Crisis," December 20, 2004–January 10, 2005). The paper is now available at fightingterror.org. Foer also says that members of the CPD "heatedly debated" that paper. To the best of my knowledge, the debate was lively and collegial—not heated.

As Foer appreciates, "neocon" is a very loose label. These days, it is generally applied to those who believe that, first, American power can be a force for good, and, second, that encouraging democracy and freedom in the Middle East is both possible and necessary to safeguard the nation's long-term interests. Within that broad strategic framework, there are bound to be disagreements over tactics. Even so, I think Foer is correct to argue that neoconservatives have "divided minds" where Iran is concerned. But I suspect that, were there full agreement among those at such institutes as the CPD, the Project for the New American Century, the American Enterprise Institute, and the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, we would have been portrayed as rigid ideologues marching in lockstep. (Or am I paranoid—as well as schizophrenic?) Finally, Iran presents a serious problem to which there may be no good solutions, only solutions that are less bad. It is not merely in recent years that the question of what to do about Iran has been deferred. Iranian Islamism first challenged the United States and the West in 1979, but for a quarter-century, one administration after another kicked that can down the road. Couldn't that be the reason that neither neocons nor others have easy answers now?

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About Your Professor

Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He received his Masters of Divinity and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. He has won several teaching awards, including the Students' Undergraduate Teaching Award and the Bowman and Gordon Gray Award for Excellence in Teaching. Professor Ehrman has written or edited 12 books.

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Tipping Point

TRB
FROM WASHINGTON

SAY WHAT YOU WILL ABOUT George W. Bush, he has never been one to underestimate the malleability of human behavior. He touted the transformative power of faith as a candidate in 2001. In 2004, he promised that the mere act of owning stock or a home would imbue citizens with virtues like hard work and self-reliance. And, anticipating this week's Iraqi elections, he stressed the "transformational power of liberty."

The media has generally treated this as evidence of Bush's unique strain of compassionate, "Wilsonian" conservatism—a major departure from mainstream Republicanism. But, in truth, Republicans have been peddling various "transformative powers" for over 25 years. They do it whenever they need to conceal the fact that they're limiting government.

In the late '70s, when the balance of power within the GOP began shifting from moderate Northeasterners toward Sunbelt conservatives, Republicans faced a dilemma. On the one hand, the party was committing itself to smaller government. On the other, post–New Deal era voters expected government to address their problems. Republicans knew they still needed to *do* things. They just didn't want them to cost much—or require any sacrifice to speak of. The solution? Instead of having government tackle problems like poverty (pretty costly), Republicans would reprogram people to do it themselves (relatively cheap). The reprogramming would consist of one-off transformative events, such as buying a house or finding God.

The first bona fide experiment in transformative-power Republicanism came in the early '80s, when the GOP wanted to cut taxes. Realizing they would encounter resistance from Democrats and deficit hawks, supply-siders in and around the Reagan administration devised an ingenious rationale: Americans, they argued, would respond to lower tax rates by working longer and harder. So much harder, in fact, that slashing taxes would actually raise more revenue than before. "People change their behavior when their marginal incentives change," explained supply-side guru Arthur Laffer. The resulting 1981 tax cut helped triple the deficit by 1983.

Except for a few speeches by Jack Kemp (dismissed even by Republicans as the ravings of a lunatic supply-sider), transformative-power Republicanism didn't really reemerge until 1994. At that point, Newt Gingrich argued that forcing people to pay for health care out of personal "health savings accounts" would transform them into cost-conscious consumers, creating savings so large that Congress could slash Medicare. He also suggested that making schools compete for students (via vouchers) would improve performance so much that it would reduce the need for education spending. Gingrich even proposed giving poor people tax breaks to buy computers, the mere purchase of which would supposedly help lift them out of poverty.

But it was Bush who elevated transformative-power Republicanism to party doctrine. As a candidate in 2000, Bush claimed that exposing troubled teens to the power of faith could transform them into model citizens; Republicans exulted that it would help reduce social spending. Republicans swooned again when Bush unveiled his "ownership society" last year. Stock ownership, they argued, would transform people into expert retirement planners who would no longer need generous Social Security benefits. Bush was well-positioned to argue the power of transformation: Faith had transformed him from a problem drinker into the president.

To be fair, some Republicans genuinely believed their own rhetoric. And Republican faith in things like church attendance or ownership isn't entirely misplaced. All of these activities are *correlated* with virtuous behavior. What's far less clear is that they *cause* virtuous behavior. A study by Ohio State University economist Donald Haurin concluded that, once you control for self-selection—the fact that more responsible people tend to buy homes—much of home ownership's alleged benefits evaporate. The same problem renders faith-based initiatives suspect. Cutting income-tax rates does marginally affect people's decisions to work, and competition does marginally improve school quality. But it turns out that building a virtuous and prosperous society is a lot more difficult than engineering a single, transformative event.

That hasn't stopped the Bush administration from taking transformative-power Republicanism global. Case in point: when Army Chief of Staff Eric Shinseki said rebuilding Iraq would require several hundred thousand troops, Paul Wolfowitz called his estimates "way off the mark." The Bushies argued that the transformational power of liberty—the mere experience of having Saddam Hussein overthrown—would stimulate Iraqis to rebuild the country themselves. "I am reasonably certain that they will greet us as liberators," Wolfowitz explained, "and that will help us to keep [troop] requirements down."

One could interpret this as idealism. A more cynical reading is that Republicans were squaring the same circle they have been squaring since the '70s: Because there's no constituency for nation-building in the GOP, the White House had to sell the Iraq war as having a much lower price tag than it actually required.

It wasn't easy to tell which scenario was right until Iraq descended into chaos. The administration could have responded with more troops. Instead, it began pointing to this week's elections as the transformative event that would bring democracy, as when White House spokesman Scott McClellan claimed that "free elections" would mean a "free Iraq." Certainly this is how Republicans interpreted the result. "[The elections] mark a historic transformation in Iraqi society," wrote American Enterprise Institute scholar Michael Rubin in *The Wall Street Journal*.

I hope they're right. But, as my colleague Lawrence F. Kaplan reported last week ("The Last Casualty," February 7), there's a very real chance the administration's failure to do the hard work of nation-building put liberal democracy out of reach long before election day. The slates that likely won Sunday's election range from moderate theocrats to secular strongmen. Worse, the election sets up a perilous catch-22: Most Shia went to the polls to end the occupation. But the only way Iraqis will see a second election is if the United States remains in Iraq for the foreseeable future. Then again, if elections don't bring freedom to Iraq, we can always try tax-subsidized computers.

NOAM SCHEIBER

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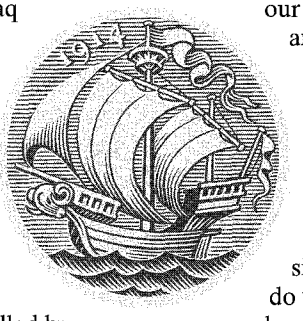
Wrong Way

THE SIGHT OF millions of Iraqis braving violence to exercise their right to vote in an election that could be a milestone in the region provided a much-needed dose of cheer to a post-invasion period that has been fraught with seemingly insurmountable difficulties. It was a sight that gave many Americans—even those who opposed the war—cause for optimism. But it was not enough to dissuade Senator Ted Kennedy from his belief, laid out last week, that American troops ought to begin immediately pulling out of Iraq. "The U.S. military presence has become part of the problem," the senior senator from Massachusetts instructed a Washington audience, "not part of the solution." Seconding this appraisal, 25 Democrats quickly introduced a bill in the House of Representatives calling for an immediate pullout.

The strategic rationale for a U.S. withdrawal is simple: Because American troops have become "part of the problem," their removal will improve Iraq's security situation. But, while the presence of American troops may inflame the insurgency, it does not follow that our departure would pacify the militants, who increasingly have Iraqis, not Americans, in their sights. After all, the shootings and car bombs that plague everyday life in Iraq have mostly been aimed at (and exacted their steepest toll from) innocent Iraqis—politicians, civic activists, ordinary citizens, Christians, Shia—not U.S. forces. They clearly will continue to do so regardless of the U.S. presence.

Our first bequest to the still-forming Iraqi government must not be chaos. For an exit strategy to work, it must take into account the fact that Iraqi security forces cannot yet battle the insurgency on their own, and that Iraqi soldiers have backed down from several major battles with militants. It must address the prospect that a civil war could very well ensue in the aftermath of a premature U.S. departure. It must explain how to mitigate the dangers the newly elected parliament could face absent the protection of U.S. forces.

Iraq's security forces, after all, are nowhere near the Pentagon's goal of 135,000 Iraqi police, 62,000 national guardsmen, and 24,000 soldiers. The insurgency is far from vanquished. And, while U.S. aims in Iraq may have been reduced since the invasion, they have not disappeared altogether. It may be too late to create a truly liberal Iraq, but it is not too late to prevent Iraq from coming apart at the seams. That means preventing Iraq from becoming a power vacuum filled by terrorist organizations, which is what a recent National Intelligence Council report suggested Iraq is fast becoming. Only an Iraqi government with the ability to secure Iraq's provinces can prevent this outcome. And only the United States military can fill the gap in the meantime.



Of course, if the sovereign Iraqi government asks for an immediate U.S. withdrawal, the White House should agree; Americans must not remain against the Iraqis' will. But there are few signs the Iraqi leadership will make such a request. This week, Iraq's interim president, Ghazi Al Yawar, told reporters that it would be "complete nonsense" to ask American troops to leave now; and even the United Iraqi Alliance, the Shia candidates' slate endorsed by Grand Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani, has dropped the demand for withdrawal from its platform. One Alliance politician, Mowaffaq Al Rubaie, called the prospect "a recipe for disaster." Another, Ibrahim Jaafari, has said, "If the United States pulls out too fast, there would be chaos."

When Iraqi forces have been trained and deployed in sufficient numbers, the United States should pack up and come home. That training process should be expedited and expanded to the greatest extent possible, assigning American officers direct contacts in the Iraqi forces in order to build leadership, with the goal of having Iraqi forces at the head of combat missions by this spring. But our departure may not arrive for several years—perhaps at a cost of thousands more U.S. casualties in Iraq and substantial discord here at home.

Yet there is no other way. Critics of the decision to go to war would do well to recall that we are no longer debating the merits of invading Iraq. We are debating the merits of quitting Iraq. Having turned that country inside out, and having unleashed centrifugal forces that Iraqis by themselves do not have the means to subdue, a premature withdrawal from Iraq would not right the wrongs of the past. It would only exacerbate the problems of the present. ■

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NOTEBOOK

MISSING MONEY IN INDIANA . . . SEARCH FOR IT IN IRAQ

A BLADE THAT CUTS BOTH WAYS

WHEN MITCH DANIELS SERVED as George W. Bush's budget director, he performed a critical p.r. service for the president. Daniels argued that the proper response to ballooning budget deficits was not to scale back Bush's mammoth tax cuts, but rather for Congress to show some spending discipline. In one July 2002 interview with *The Washington Post*, Daniels blithely implied that, if Congress would just slash spending by as much as many state governments have been forced to, the federal budget could be back in balance as early as 2005.

Daniels always talked as though such cuts should be easy to swallow, implying that government spending was full of easily excised fat; the president even dubbed him "the Blade." This, of course, ignored the fact that—despite the obnoxious rise in pork-barrel spending in recent years—Bush's tax cuts are far more responsible for the deficit than congressional profligacy.

But Daniels can't get away with that spin anymore. Last year, you see, he returned to his home state of Indiana and got himself elected governor. Suddenly his easy conservative bromides have collided with reality. Daniels now presides over his very own fiscal shortfall of $250 million, and, because Indiana's constitution prohibits deficit spending, something has to be done. Indiana has already suffered several rounds of painful budget cuts, making the process of finding more places to trim all the more difficult.

And so, in his annual budget request last month, Daniels proposed a temporary tax hike of 1 percent on workers earning more than $100,000. Meanwhile, his own budget calls for an additional $1 billion in spending over the next two years. That's what happens when you have to face the voters and balance the budget at the same time: You're forced to choose between competing priorities, rather than hand out tax cuts to your base while railing against spending in the abstract.

Mitch Daniels

In a rich irony, Daniels's former conservative cheerleaders are now turning on him for this heresy. This week *The Wall Street Journal* dubbed Daniels "Mitch the Knife" for "stick[ing] it to taxpayers" with "a pocketbook raid." The *Journal* wondered why Daniels isn't trying harder to cut spending. It seems Mitch Daniels now has his own Mitch Daniels.

VIDEOTAPE, SEX, AND LIES

IF AMERICANS ARE GOING TO BECOME torturers—and some of us would still prefer not to—we should at least stop videotaping ourselves doing it. According to the Associated Press, the latest home movies out of Guantánamo show prisoners being punched, forced to strip naked, and taunted while repeatedly blasted with bursts of pepper spray. It's not going to win us a Baath Academy Award, the coveted Uday™, but it might garner us a nomination.

Sadly, evidence is growing that the videotapes hardly depict isolated incidents. Former Army Sergeant Erik R. Saar, who spent the first half of 2003 as a translator at the U.S. prison camp in Guantánamo, has chronicled even more outrageous behavior in a book he hopes to release. According to Saar, female interrogators were used extensively at Guantánamo in an attempt to break detainees. Among their techniques: dressing in thong underwear, grabbing detainees in a sexual manner, and smearing the faces of prisoners with fake menstrual blood.

In other words, Guantánamo keeps getting worse—going from quiet disgrace to quiet calamity. Amid the Bush administration's claims of "humane" treatment, it's especially telling that a former National Guardsman who briefly posed undercover as an unruly prisoner was beaten so severely by his colleagues that he suffered brain damage. Perhaps we'll come to our senses at some point. Until then, the Arab press, much of which grudgingly covered the Iraqi elections, will no doubt be grateful to have a counterweight like this for its pages.

MAYBE IT'S WITH THE WMD

WITH THE IRAQI ELECTIONS NOW behind us, the days of the old Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) were beginning to recede into memory. In a nostalgic moment, we even had a wistful thought or two about former CPA administrator L. Paul Bremer trekking through Baghdad in his Brooks Brothers suit and Timberlands. Ah, Jerry: so debonair, so incompetent. But, before the CPA could drift quietly into the annals of history, a new audit report brought it all vividly back to life.

Prepared by Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction Stuart W. Bowen Jr., the report reveals that the

DAVID COWLES

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provisional government was unable to account for a whopping $8.8 billion in Iraqi funds. The money, which comprises about half of the total amount the CPA administered in a development account amassed from Iraqi oil revenue and other assets, seems to have been sunk into such worthy enterprises as paying nonexistent employees, honoring unauthorized contracts, and lining the wallets of unscrupulous ministers. Iraqi finances were "left open to fraud, kickbacks and misappropriation of funds." Meanwhile, some top CPA officials apparently had no idea how to do their jobs. When a U.S. adviser queried his CPA superiors for more information on his duties, an e-mailed response reassuringly stated that there were "no written guidelines" to consult. To make matters worse, the coalition employed mostly "inexperienced recent college graduates" to staff its main budget office. "CPA management of Iraq's national budget process and oversight of Iraqi funds was burdened by severe inefficiencies and poor management," the report concludes.

Both Bremer and the Pentagon were quick to dismiss the findings as the naïve idealism of an outsider. Bremer contended that Bowen had held the CPA to "an unrealistic standard," while a Defense Department spokesman noted the "extraordinary conditions" under which the agency had labored. What's a missing billion or eight here or there when you've got a country to rebuild?

HOME NEWS

STARTING THIS WEEK, EDITOR PETER Beinart will be on leave until September 1, writing a book on liberalism as a guest scholar at the Brookings Institution. Executive Editor J. Peter Scoblic will serve as acting editor, with Beinart continuing to participate in editorial deliberations. During Beinart's absence, Jonathan Cohn and Noam Scheiber will alternate writing TRB. ■

TNR.commentary

IRAQ'D

SPENCER ACKERMAN

CLERICAL CONDITION: According to the Associated Press, the Association of Muslim Scholars has officially called the election illegitimate:

> In its statement, the association said the election "lacks legitimacy because a large portion of these people who represent many spectra have boycotted it." As a result, the group said the new leadership lacked a mandate to draft a new constitution and should be considered a temporary administration. . . .
>
> "We are going to respect the choice of those who voted and we will consider the new government if all the parties participating in the political process agree on it as a transitional government with limited powers."

Huh? Of course the transitional government is—well, transitional. Does the Association really think the new government will abandon the task of writing a constitution? It sounds like the Sunni clerics are hewing to their original position—elections under occupation are illegitimate—while indicating a certain willingness to compromise. ("We are going to respect the choice of those who voted.") But perhaps not: They could be inclined to hew to a more strident position when the Sunni turnout figures, expected to be significantly below those for Kurdish and Shia participation, are released. In any case, now would be an excellent time for Grand Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani to send an emissary to the Association's Harith Al Dhari to see what Al Dhari wants and what he's willing to accept. After all, Sistani's message, delivered through an aide, was crystal clear, as the Iraqi Press Monitor helpfully translates:

> I convey the greetings and blessings of Sistani to the entire Iraqi people, Shia, Sunni, Arab, Kurd, and other ethnicities, for this big achievement, wishing them to live under one tent—the Iraqi tent.

The sooner Sistani can translate his words into actions, the better for the entire Iraqi tent.

&c.

NOAM SCHEIBER

WHAT'S THE LESSON OF DASCHLE'S LOSS? Obviously, one of the key tasks confronting Democrats these days is figuring out why they lost last fall's election. Almost as obviously, one of the most serious mistakes Democrats could make at this point would be to substitute media CW for drawn-out soul-searching. Case in point: a story in January 30's *New York Times* about the politics of Social Security. According to the piece:

> Democrats know that if they are going to find a way out of the minority, they must do more than simply block the White House, a tactic that led Republicans to define the last Senate Democratic leader, Tom Daschle of South Dakota, as an "obstructionist" and contributed to his defeat in November. They will need to come up with their own idea for revamping Social Security.

Now, it's possible that being labeled an "obstructionist" cost Tom Daschle his Senate seat. But, at best, that's a proximate cause. The much more direct cause was the fact that he happened to be defending a seat against a strong challenger in a state that went Republican by over 20 points at the presidential level, while also serving as the Democratic leader in the Senate. In fact, it's not clear Daschle needed to do a whole lot to earn the "obstructionist" label. Republicans would have attempted to brand him "obstructionist" regardless of what he did, short of vote with the White House 100 percent of the time. So what's the lesson here again?

The same *Times* piece also reported:

> Republicans, for their part, are portraying Democrats as do-nothing lawmakers who would "pass the buck" to the next generation, as Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania told reporters this week. Mr. Santorum said he hoped some "brave souls on the other side" would cooperate. The likely suspects: Democrats from Republican-leaning states who are up for re-election in 2006.

But it's not entirely clear why even Democrats from Republican-leaning states should be worried about opposing Social Security privatization. In the last few years, Republicans have pointed to Senate races in North Carolina, South Carolina, and New Hampshire as cases in which a Republican senator won despite his or her support for private accounts. But that's a long way from the claim that supporting privatization helped them win votes—or that a Democrat in these states would be hurt by opposing private accounts. There is, quite simply, no empirical evidence that anyone has ever been hurt politically by opposing privatization—red state, blue state, whatever.

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Jerusalem Dispatch

True Colors

BY MICHAEL B. OREN

IMAGINE THE LIKELIHOOD of thousands of American students, intellectuals, and Hollywood celebrities marching in support of George W. Bush, and you will begin to appreciate the marvel of the Israeli leftists now rallying around Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Reviled for engineering the Lebanon war, for masterminding the settlement movement, for opposing every attempt at reconciliation with the Palestinians, and as the personification of Israeli militarism and anti-Arab racism, Sharon today is viewed by many leftists as the settlers' *bête noire* and Israel's foremost champion of peace. While Jerusalem's Zion Square was crowded in 1995 with rightists cheering Sharon's commitment to Greater Israel, Tel Aviv's Rabin Square has recently been the site of rallies of thousands of leftists, who have applauded the prime minister's decision to evacuate Gaza and negotiate with the Palestinian Authority.

Sharon's transformation from warrior to peacemaker, making the Gaza withdrawal his personal crusade, has shocked the Israeli left, but many right-wing Israelis long anticipated that change. Raised in a secular Labor environment, Sharon was never nurtured on religious or conservative ideology, and, for all his opposition to a return to Israel's pre-1967 borders, he repeatedly conceded territories captured in the Six Day War. And, when his policies no longer enjoy public support, Sharon, unlike true rightists, pays no mind to the will of the people—a tendency historically displayed by members of Israel's socialist left. Sharon, rightists insist, is actually a Mapainik.

THOUGH VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN outside the Jewish state, the term Mapainik is part of the Israeli lexicon as much as Dixiecrat was once part of the U.S. lexicon—a code word laden with political and cultural assumptions. Mapai is a Hebrew acronym for the Israel Workers Party, the dominant Zionist movement in pre-Israel Palestine and the ruling political party for the first decades after Israel's independence.

Though founded only in 1930, Mapai embodied the values of the second and third *aliyot*, or waves of Zionist immigration to Palestine, between 1903 and 1923. This was the generation that produced the socialist moshav and the communist kibbutz, which replaced Judaism with the secular religion of labor. Among the principles of this new faith was an unequivocal devotion to the land of Israel, a belief in the power of that soil to redeem the Jewish hands that worked it. Not pacifists, the pioneers shied neither from defending their farms from Arab attacks nor from the thought of someday fighting for statehood. But Mapai members were also renowned for their pragmatism, for knowing when to compromise and consolidate their gains while hoping to expand them in the future.

The Mapai ethos was already discernible in 1925, when the Zionist movement accepted Great Britain's decision to exclude Transjordan from the area promised to the Jews under its Palestine Mandate. But it was not until Britain abandoned Zionism altogether, on the eve of World War II, that Mapai-style Zionism became dominant, under the leadership of the Mapainik par excellence, David Ben-Gurion. After Britain issued the so-called White Paper curtailing Jewish immigration into Palestine, Ben-Gurion took the middle ground, vowing to fight the White Paper as if there were no war and the war as if there were no White Paper. Again, in 1947, when the United Nations partitioned Palestine, Ben-Gurion argued that the Jews should take any state they were offered and worry about its borders later. During the War of Independence, Ben-Gurion indeed broadened those borders, but he ordered the army to stop short of conquering the West Bank and Gaza.

Contesting the Mapainiks' near-monopoly over Zionist politics were the Revisionists, led by Vladimir Jabotinsky and his disciple, Menachem Begin. In contrast to the mostly rural and irreligious Labor Zionists, Revisionists tended to be urban, capitalistic, and respectful of religious tradition. They were also imbued with a vision of a Jewish state in all of the biblical Land of Israel—from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea—and much less flexible diplomatically. They rejected Transjordan's detachment from Palestine, and, in World War II, they fought both Britain and the White Paper. Begin never reconciled himself to the loss of the West Bank and Gaza, and, with their capture in 1967, Begin urged that both be settled by Jews.

BORN IN 1928 on a moshav to veterans of the second *aliya*, Ariel Sharon was a natural Mapainik. He participated in the Labor youth movement and served in military units closely associated with Mapai. He avoided any contact with Revisionist underground groups during the struggle for independence and later shunned Begin's political party, Herut. In fact, Sharon stayed clear of politics entirely until his retirement from the army in 1973, when he briefly joined the centrist Liberal faction before returning to the army to serve in the Yom Kippur War. Subsequently, Sharon became the chief military adviser to Labor Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and, in that capacity, helped facilitate Israeli army pullbacks in Sinai and the Golan Heights—the first Israeli concessions of territories taken in 1967.

Sharon formed his own party, Shlomtzion, in 1977, and personally drafted its platform. Not only would Israel forfeit territories in order to achieve peace, Sharon wrote, but

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it would also negotiate with any Palestinian organization—presumably including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)—willing to recognize the Jewish state. Sharon later said he formed his own party, rather than simply joining Labor, the successor to Mapai, because he was disgusted with the cronyism in Labor. Still, following his pragmatic Mapai instincts, Sharon initially tried to have Shlomtzion form a joint list with Labor. After Labor refused, Sharon approached the centrist Shinui. When they, too, refused, Sharon revised his platform along more right-wing principles, declared his admiration for Begin's commitment to Greater Israel, and approached Herut. Begin embraced Sharon and, together with other factions, they formed the Likud, which then dealt Labor its first national defeat.

Though a latecomer to conservative politics, Sharon outflanked Begin to the right. As agriculture minister, he pushed through the construction of dozens of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. During peace talks with the Egyptians in 1979, Sharon vowed that Israel would never concede its historic homeland. Yet, during those same talks, Sharon signaled his support for returning all of the territory Israel had captured from Egypt. In April 1982, the last Israeli settlers were evicted from Sinai on the order of Ariel Sharon.

By talking right but acting pragmatically, Sharon was adhering to the classic Mapainik tradition. Yet, in addition to its distinctive stands on territorial and security issues, that heritage also had a peculiar relationship with democracy. In contrast to Revisionists and Likudniks, who traced their intellectual roots back to nineteenth-century Central European liberalism, Mapai's founders came from the revolutionary turmoil of turn-of-the-century Russia, with its preference for proletarian dictatorships. In Israel, the non-religious right has always been the champion of individual freedoms and the rule of law, while leftist leaders were notorious for pushing through their personal agendas, irrespective of democratic norms. The young Ben-Gurion, who modeled himself on Lenin, rejected the liberal constitution proposed by Herut shortly after independence. He waged a war against Egypt in 1956 without so much as informing the Knesset.

In his disavowal of democratic institutions, Sharon is much less a Likudnik than a Mapainik. Several ministers insinuated that he executed Israel's ill-fated 1982 invasion of Lebanon almost unilaterally, without fully consulting the cabinet. Similarly, Sharon was accused of singlehandedly allocating vast sums for the construction of roads and settlements in the territories. And today, Sharon is once again revealing his Mapainik relationship with democracy. His decision to disengage from Gaza is based on the practical realization that the majority of Israelis are no longer willing to defend the settlements there and that Israel's occupation of the Strip only strengthens Palestinian demands for the creation of a binational Arab-Jewish state. Evacuating Gaza also enables Sharon to test the willingness and ability of Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas to crack down on terrorism before Israel proceeds to negotiate the future of the West Bank and Jerusalem—all policies unacceptable to true Likudniks like Begin and Benjamin Netanyahu, who could be pragmatic under U.S. pressure but would never give up on the idea of a Greater Israel.

Were he in power today, Ben-Gurion would have done exactly the same as Sharon. Ben-Gurion also would not have let opponents in his own party, or in society at large, stand in his way. Sharon, too, has trampled over detractors—first by inviting a Likud referendum on disengagement, then by ignoring its results when he lost. He has since rejected all suggestions of holding a national plebiscite on withdrawal. In fact, Sharon is proceeding with disengagement while enjoying a majority of only two votes in the Knesset, both of which he purchased from ultra-Orthodox parties by agreeing to fund their religious schools.

Sharon insists that all his decisions are justified by the mandate voters gave him in 2001. But those ballots were cast for a candidate who specifically negated the idea of unilateral withdrawal and who lovingly referred to the Gaza settlements as "our home." Indeed, Sharon's autocratic actions have spurred a large-scale defection of Likud members from the center to the extreme right, with some even calling for violent disobedience against the withdrawal.

Sharon has also thickened his coalition with members of Labor, the party that emerged from Mapai after its dissolution in 1968 but that still lays claim to its legacy. Apart from its name, though, today's Labor has little in common with its predecessor. Over the past 20 years, Labor has steadily abandoned its commitment to preserve the Land of Israel and promote the interests of Israeli workers. The same Rabin who ran for prime minister in 1992, rejecting negotiations with the PLO and concessions of vital areas of the West Bank and Gaza, signed a treaty the next year with Arafat laying the foundations of a future Palestinian state in virtually all of the territories. The same Shimon Peres who ran for prime minister in 1981 championing the rights of workers, surrounded by red socialist flags, ran again in 1996 with TV ads flashing pictures of McDonald's and SUVs.

TODAY, FACING MOUNTING pressures for a one-state solution and persistent threats from Palestinian terrorism, Israel surely needs the hard-nosed realism of Ben-Gurion. Israel must never return to the unworkable borders of 1967 or negotiate under fire, but neither can it afford to absorb millions of Palestinians and tip its demographic balance toward binationalism. At the same time, confronting the danger of severe internal schisms—perhaps even violence between settlers and the soldiers ordered to evict them—Israel also needs a Begin. Democracy, whether in the form of a national referendum on disengagement or elections, is essential to limiting the trauma of removing thousands of Israelis from their homes. To preserve Israel's integrity and security, to safeguard its society, Ariel Sharon must be not only the last Mapainik, but the last Likudnik as well. ■

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The Democratic divide.

The Outsiders

BY RYAN LIZZA

IF YOU'VE BOTHERED to pay any attention to the low-wattage drama of the race for chairman of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), you probably know that Howard Dean is on the verge of winning it. But, during a three-month process in which many candidates and would-be candidates have stumbled briefly into the fray, nothing is more illustrative of how Democratic politics have changed than the fate of Leo Hindery.

You've probably never heard of Hindery, but he is one of the party establishment's longtime moneymen. In the old soft-money days, the cable TV baron could be counted on to write six-figure checks to the DNC. During the last presidential race, when his friend Dick Gephardt was getting torn to shreds by Dean, Hindery dropped $100,000 on TV ads tying the Vermont governor to Osama bin Laden. Hindery jumped into the DNC race in early December, noisily proclaiming the backing of Gephardt and Tom Daschle. He soon steered his private jet toward Orlando, where Democrats were meeting to kick off the chairmanship race. But Hindery never even made it inside the drab hotel ballroom where DNC members grilled Dean and the other candidates.

A guerrilla squad of Democratic bloggers had already gone to work on him, noting that he is an ex-Republican and that, even as a Democrat, he had given money to the GOP. Meanwhile, the usually irrelevant 447 members of the DNC—known simply as "the 447"—sensed a rare opportunity to take control of the selection process as never before. The members are generally local party operatives and activists elected or appointed to the DNC. Technically, they *are* the Democratic Party. But institutionally, they are hostile to Beltway Democrats, who they believe ignore them. And recently, they've been emboldened by the renaissance of grassroots politics. In previous years they swallowed hard and rubber-stamped a Terry McAuliffe or a Ron Brown, but the idea that a former Republican financier had been sent down to Florida by two defeated Democrats who had spent their last years in Washington watching the GOP take over the town did not sit well with the 447.

Hindery's aides, after scouting the situation, gently explained to him that he didn't have a chance. He turned his jet around and flew away. As Hindery's spokeswoman, Democratic consultant Jennifer Bluestein, said with more than a touch of understatement, "He recognized his best role is to remain a party fund-raiser." That night, in Hindery's abandoned hotel suite, a gaggle of Democratic operatives raided his mini-bar and mockingly toasted the death of his absurd candidacy: "To Leo!"

In hindsight, the boozy requiem wasn't just for Hindery, but for an era. The DNC chair race has exposed deep fissures within the Democratic Party. Some of these are ideological, but the real story of the race is the diffusion of power away from Washington and to new people and entities that have rushed to fill the power vacuum at the top of the party. When the Democrats control the White House, the president can simply pick the chair of the party. But, even when out of power, Democratic pooh-bahs traditionally rally around a consensus figure and present him to the DNC members as a *fait accompli*. An open process with all the trappings of a modern political campaign—including a seven-candidate field, fund-raising, regional debates, and smear campaigns in the press—is unprecedented in the party's history. To many Washington Democrats watching the circus-like contest from afar, it has been an embarrassment. "I think it's pathetic," says James Carville. "It's so indicative of the Democratic Party. Now we're just playing into every stereotype: We're weak, disorganized, flopping around. ... Somebody should have fixed this damn thing in November. I wish someone would have taken charge and three or four people would have gotten together in a smoke-filled room. ... They're not running for president! They are running for party chair. This is supposed to be a rigged deal. You think the Republicans would do it this way?"

But every attempt to rig the race failed, revealing that the levers of power in the Democratic Party have shifted out of Washington's hands. From the congressional leadership to the governors to the Clintons, top Democrats were all terrified of a Dean victory. They believe he will turn what is essentially a low-key fund-raising and management position into a lightning rod for GOP attacks, eclipsing other voices and emphasizing exactly the elements of the party that weeks of postelection soul-searching had determined the Democrats needed to play down (e.g., its liberal stance on cultural issues and its weakness on national security). And yet none of them could stop him.

THERE WAS A Keystone Kops feel to how inept the Democratic leadership proved in its attempts to find an alternative to the dreaded Dean. Gephardt and Daschle flamed out with Hindery. Bill Clinton tried to recruit Wesley Clark, but the general politely declined, citing his own presidential ambitions for 2008. John Kerry, in his first postelection attempt to influence his party, flitted from candidate to candidate—Iowa Governor Tom Vilsack one day, ex–New Hampshire Governor Jeanne Shaheen the next—but neither entered the race. A former Michigan governor named Jim Blanchard was briefly resurrected from obscurity and pushed into the race by a trio of Democratic governors, but he was a dud.

One of the most inept attempts to stop Dean was engineered by Nancy Pelosi, the Democratic House leader. According to numerous Democrats, Pelosi not only feared Dean, but she feared the potential anti-Dean of the race, Martin Frost, an ex-representative who was redistricted out

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of his Texas seat by Tom DeLay's political machine. Frost had challenged Pelosi for leader two years ago, and they have had a poisonous relationship ever since. She tapped former Indiana Representative Tim Roemer as her preferred candidate and persuaded Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid to back the decision. It proved to be a pivotal moment, revealing once again how the rules had changed.

When Roemer jumped in, the race had already congealed into Dean versus a field of unknowns. Now Roemer threatened to stamp out Dean's other competitors. But he was unprepared for what would happen next. The entire field of candidates, in concert with the insular liberal blogosphere, rose up and destroyed Roemer.

The hit was silent and deadly. One day I received by messenger a dirty and smudged envelope with no return address. Inside were five pages of anti-Roemer opposition research about his positions on everything from Israel and abortion to labor and Social Security. The same information was fed to numerous blogs, which quickly declared Roemer anathema. "Unless Roemer publicly, loudly, and completely repudiates his recent [pro-privatization] position on Social Security, he is utterly unacceptable as DNC chair," said a post on the pro-Dean site MyDD.com, which served as a key clearinghouse of information about the race. (Roemer did repudiate that position, but it wasn't enough.) By the time Roemer showed up on "This Week" for a Sunday morning announcement of his candidacy, which, in the old days, might have helped solidify him as the establishment choice, he was badly damaged. He spent most of his interview with George Stephanopoulos defensively responding to bloggers he had clearly never heard of, like MyDD and *The Washington Monthly*'s Kevin Drum. "The bloggers, the Internet is a very, very useful tool for us to communicate with voters, ideas. I'm very excited about it, but it can also misinterpret a vote," he complained.

Roemer never recovered. In St. Louis days later, at one of five candidate forums held around the country for DNC members to interview the aspiring chairs, Roemer rose and, glaring at Dean and candidate Simon Rosenberg, lashed out at the "secret e-mails" that were circulating about him. He angrily defended his pro-life record and testily challenged the DNC members to show some tolerance on the issue. It was a brave speech, but it was also the end of his candidacy. Applause was scattered and perfunctory. In New York the next week, he told DNC members, "We shouldn't let a special interest group decide our view on choice." This time, the audience hissed.

The Roemer episode not only exposed the power of the blogs and the weakness of the Hill leadership, it also fatally wounded Frost. He had spent the heart of the short campaign tied up making the case against Roemer instead of attacking Dean. For instance, in a letter sent out to the 447, Frost wrote, "Our party cannot be adequately led by someone whose primary qualification to serve as Chair is his opposition to core Democratic beliefs." By the time Frost turned his attention to Dean, it was much too late. "Roemer," says a top Democratic strategist speaking of the whole affair, "was a debacle."

THE BLOGGERS WERE not the only group to exert unusual, and utterly new, influence on the chairmanship race this year. A heretofore obscure entity, the Association of State Democratic Chairs (ASDC), a subgroup of the 447, moved aggressively to take the place of the bumbling Hill leadership and Democratic governors who found themselves unable to influence the process. The Democratic chairs are led by Mark Brewer, the head of the party in Michigan. He is one of the semi-anonymous cogs in the Democratic machine who has spent decades moving from one perch to another (precinct delegate, vice chair, chair) but rarely gaining respect from the establishment or much influence within the DNC. He realized this was his chance to make himself and the other state chairs major players. Brewer singlehandedly turned the selection process for party leader from a race about the future of the party into a debate about the ASDC's idiosyncratic agenda. "Brewer fancies himself the kingmaker," said a top Democratic strategist halfway through the race.

Brewer forced all the candidates to become experts on the ASDC's complaints. He sent each candidate a five-page list of demands, which was jokingly referred to as "the ransom note." It was essentially a blueprint for transferring power from Washington to the state parties. Currently, the DNC chairman gets to appoint 75 members of the DNC. Brewer wants the states to get 50 of those spots. He wants the ASDC to have office space at the DNC and a say in where the presidential conventions are held. Most controversially, he wants a new Budget and Finance Committee run by the ASDC to audit the DNC's expenditures. In the very last line of his ransom note, he simply demands that the DNC fork over an annual tribute to his group: "DNC to provide $200,000 toward ASDC annual budget."

There is an almost perfect correlation between how much the candidates pandered to the ASDC and how well they did in the race. Wonder why Harold Ickes, Hillary Clinton's chief political adviser, left the contest so early? At the first forum in Orlando, he had the temerity to tell the ASDC that they needed to fix their state parties before they come begging for money from Washington. Most of the other candidates simply promised to shower more cash on them.

The ASDC's newfound power was also evident in the cases of Donnie Fowler and Simon Rosenberg. Aside from Dean, they were the two most interesting candidates. Under the old rules, neither of them would have dared enter the race. Fowler is 37 years old, and Rosenberg is 41, but they both look younger. Fowler has a South Carolina accent and a San Francisco address. He wears a pompadour and hipster eyeglasses. His campaign began out of the sense of frustration he felt as a field organizer for several losing candidates (he was Al Gore's national field director). Fowler's bid was partly fueled by a small cadre of smart, youngish, and ideologically centrist operatives who want to rid the party of

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Bob Shrum and his cohorts, an idea Fowler expressed with his signature line about wanting to "break the party free from an aristocracy of consultants."

Rosenberg, meanwhile, has created his own niche in the party by turning his organization, the New Democrat Network, into an incubator of ideas and projects to help rebuild the party's institutions to match what Democrats see as a far superior Republican political and communications machine. Rosenberg was brilliant and charismatic in person but a less polished public speaker than Fowler. He had a tendency to press a dozen of his favorite ideas into his presentations while Fowler massaged the ASDC's erogenous zones. While Fowler's father was a past DNC chairman, the kabuki rules and oddball personalities of the DNC, not to mention the ASDC, were somewhat alien to Rosenberg and his staff.

Fowler soon became the darling of Brewer and his inner circle. Fowler's response to the ransom note was a crisp four pages, declaring at the outset, "I agree with every recommendation in principle and will support the implementation of each as DNC chair." It's hard to top that. Rosenberg, on the other hand, sent Brewer nine pages of ideas about what Democrats need to do, only some of which responded to the ASDC's pet concerns. He also flatly rejected their idea, known as the Fowler amendment—that's right, named after Donnie's father—to give the states more power to select DNC members.

From the outside, it seemed the race had come down to Dean and Frost, but Frost never made inroads with the ASDC. Brewer's group only had eyes for Dean and Fowler. Dean ran a steady and methodical campaign that stood in sharp contrast to his presidential bid. He hewed closely to the ASDC demands, supporting the Fowler amendments and promising to deliver $200,000 to each state party, and he used his celebrity to sew up rank-and-file members. "They are starstruck by him," griped a rival campaign. "They are overwhelmed. It's like, 'Oh my god! I just got off the phone with Howard Dean!' " He also slowly chipped away at holdouts terrified of his caricature as an ultra-liberal, antiwar elitist. "I am the Howard Dean who knows how to build things. I'm not Joe Trippi's creation," he told members, according to an adviser.

The ASDC-driven process inspired lots of DNC-bashing. And, just days before Brewer was to cap his kingmaker status in the party—summoning all the candidates before his 21-person executive committee for a final grilling before the ASDC made its coveted endorsement—the DNC knee-capped him instead. Party officials leaked to the press that the DNC wanted an audit of Brewer's Michigan party to account for a missing $2.5 million that the DNC had given it during the election. What's more, it turns out that the head of the Kerry-Edwards campaign in the state was none other than Donnie Fowler, a fact that raised eyebrows among the candidates in the race jealous of how much progress Fowler had made with Brewer. Making matters worse, Brewer refused to agree to the audit, an odd position for someone demanding financial accountability from the party. "We're talking about accountability and transparency inside the *DNC*. That's what's missing," Brewer told me.

Thanks in part to this mini-scandal, Brewer's effort to choose the next chairman collapsed. His executive committee, in a murky process that some of the other candidates complain was "rigged," voted for Fowler. But, when Brewer presented that recommendation to the party's state chairs and vice chairs a day later, they revolted and overwhelmingly rejected it, voting for Dean over Fowler 56 to 21. The vote all but sealed Dean's victory. None of the other candidates received more than five votes, killing their arguments that they could consolidate the anti-Dean forces. Meanwhile, Fowler's victory in the executive committee was dismissed as a fluke; he was faced with questions about the missing money in Michigan; and no senior Democrats came forward to anoint him as the anti-Dean. Dean had outmaneuvered every leader and wannabe leader in the Democratic Party.

DEAN'S APPARENT VICTORY—aides to Roemer and Fowler insist they'll stay in the race, but the rest of the field had dropped out or had plans to drop out by the time THE NEW REPUBLIC went to press—proves that a process he sparked in the primaries hasn't faded. Back then, he splintered the party roughly into a reform wing and an establishment wing. That divide was only temporarily papered over during the general election. In his plan for the DNC, Dean declares that he will "make Democrats the party of reform," and reform happens to be a hot word among Democrats these days. The emboldened DNC members talk about reform when they call for Washington Democrats to cede power and help rebuild their state parties. In the pro-Dean blogosphere, the coolest thing to do is to declare oneself "a reform Democrat." What the Deaniacs mean by that is anyone's guess, but they speak in apocalyptic terms. "We need revolution. We need total upheaval," Joyce Nowak, a 60-year-old MyDD blogger told me at one DNC meeting. Chris Bowers, another MyDD blogger, declared, "I can barely believe it. It looks like we finally won something. Outside becomes inside."

But reform is also the new buzzword in the party's idea factories and among its elite as well. Much of the Democratic Leadership Council's recent advice for the party is to retake the mantle of political reform from Republicans using issues like redistricting, ethics, and electoral reform. Similarly, Carville tells anyone who will listen that Democrats must embrace the label of reform. But they are not talking about party-wide revolution. (Carville, after all, was appalled by the open process of the DNC chair's race.) They are talking about issues Democrats can use to defeat Republicans. Dean's first hurdle as chairman will be to erase the cartoon image of him that is seared into the minds of most Americans. But, beyond that monumental task, Dean will somehow have to mend the insider-outsider cleavage in the Democratic Party, a cleavage that he, perhaps more than anyone else, is responsible for creating—and which finally brought him to power. ■

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The science of difference.

Sex Ed

BY STEVEN PINKER

WHEN I WAS an undergraduate in the early 1970s, I was assigned a classic paper published in *Scientific American* that began: "There is an experiment in psychology that you can perform easily in your home.... Buy two presents for your wife, choosing things ... she will find equally attractive." Just ten years after those words were written, the author's blithe assumption that his readers were male struck me as comically archaic. By the early '70s, women in science were no longer an oddity or a joke but a given. Today, in my own field, the study of language development in children, a majority of the scientists are women. Even in scientific fields with a higher proportion of men, the contributions of women are so indispensable that any talk of turning back the clock would be morally heinous and scientifically ruinous.

Yet to hear the reaction to Harvard President Lawrence Summers's remarks at a conference on gender imbalances in science, in which he raised the possibility of innate sex differences, one might guess that he had proposed exactly that. Nancy Hopkins, the eminent MIT biologist and advocate for women in science, stormed out of the room to avoid, she said, passing out from shock. An engineering dean called his remarks "an intellectual tsunami," and, with equal tastelessness, a *Boston Globe* columnist compared him to people who utter racial epithets or wear swastikas. Alumnae threatened to withhold donations, and the National Organization of Women called for his resignation. Summers was raked in a letter signed by more than 100 Harvard faculty members and shamed into issuing serial apologies.

Summers did not, of course, say that women are "natively inferior," that "they just can't cut it," that they suffer "an inherent cognitive deficit in the sciences," or that men have "a monopoly on basic math ability," as many academics and journalists assumed. Only a madman could believe such things. Summers's analysis of why there might be fewer women in mathematics and science is commonplace among economists who study gender disparities in employment, though it is rarely mentioned in the press or in academia when it comes to discussions of the gender gap in science and engineering. The fact that women make up only 20 percent of the workforce in science, engineering, and technology development has at least three possible (and not mutually exclusive) explanations. One is the persistence of discrimination, discouragement, and other barriers. In popular discussions of gender imbalances in the workforce, this is the explanation most mentioned. Although no one can deny that women in science still face these injustices, there are reasons to doubt they are the only explanation. A second possibility is that gender disparities can arise in the absence of discrimination as long as men and women differ, on average, in their mixture of talents, temperaments, and interests—whether this difference is the result of biology, socialization, or an interaction of the two. A third explanation is that child-rearing, still disproportionately shouldered by women, does not easily co-exist with professions that demand Herculean commitments of time. These considerations speak against the reflex of attributing every gender disparity to gender discrimination and call for research aimed at evaluating the explanations.

THE ANALYSIS SHOULD have been unexceptionable. Anyone who has fled a cluster of men at a party debating the fine points of flat-screen televisions can appreciate that fewer women than men might choose engineering, even in the absence of arbitrary barriers. (As one female social scientist noted in *Science Magazine*, "Reinventing the curriculum will not make me more interested in learning how my dishwasher works.") To what degree these and other differences originate in biology must be determined by research, not fatwa. History tells us that how much we want to believe a proposition is not a reliable guide as to whether it is true.

Nor is a better understanding of the causes of gender disparities inconsequential. Overestimating the extent of sex discrimination is not without costs. Unprejudiced people of both sexes who are responsible for hiring and promotion decisions may be falsely charged with sexism. Young women may be pressured into choosing lines of work they don't enjoy. Some proposed cures may do more harm than good; for example, gender quotas for grants could put deserving grantees under a cloud of suspicion, and forcing women onto all university committees would drag them from their labs into endless meetings. An exclusive focus on overt discrimination also diverts attention from policies that penalize women inadvertently because of the fact that, as the legal theorist Susan Estrich has put it, "Waiting for the connection between gender and parenting to be broken is waiting for Godot." A tenure clock that conflicts with women's biological clocks, and family-unfriendly demands like evening seminars and weekend retreats, are obvious examples. The regrettably low proportion of women who have received tenured job offers from Harvard during Summers's presidency may be an unintended consequence of his policy of granting tenure to scholars early in their careers, when women are more likely to be bearing the full burdens of parenthood.

Conservative columnists have had a field day pointing to the Harvard hullabaloo as a sign of runaway political cor-

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rectness at elite universities. Indeed, the quality of discussion among the nation's leading scholars and pundits is not a pretty sight. Summers's critics have repeatedly mangled his suggestion that innate differences might be one cause of gender disparities (a suggestion that he drew partly from a literature review in my book, *The Blank Slate*) into the claim that they must be the only cause. And they have converted his suggestion that the statistical distributions of men's and women's abilities are not identical to the claim that all men are talented and all women are not—as if someone heard that women typically live longer than men and concluded that every woman lives longer than every man. Just as depressing is an apparent unfamiliarity with the rationale behind political equality, as when Hopkins sarcastically remarked that, if Summers were right, Harvard should amend its admissions policy, presumably to accept fewer women. This is a classic confusion between the factual claim that men and women are not indistinguishable and the moral claim that we ought to judge people by their individual merits rather than the statistics of their group.

Many of Summers's critics believe that talk of innate gender differences is a relic of Victorian pseudoscience, such as the old theory that cogitation harms women by diverting blood from their ovaries to their brains. In fact, much of the scientific literature has reported numerous statistical differences between men and women. As I noted in *The Blank Slate*, for instance, men are, on average, better at mental rotation and mathematical word problems; women are better at remembering locations and at mathematical calculation. Women match shapes more quickly, are better at reading faces, are better spellers, retrieve words more fluently, and have a better memory for verbal material. Men take greater risks and place a higher premium on status; women are more solicitous to their children.

Of course, just because men and women are different does not mean that the differences are triggered by genes. People develop their talents and personalities in response to their social milieu, which can change rapidly. So some of today's sex differences in cognition could be as culturally determined as sex differences in hair and clothing. But the belief, still popular among some academics (particularly outside the biological sciences), that children are born unisex and are molded into male and female roles by their parents and society is becoming less credible. Many sex differences are universal across cultures (the twentieth-century belief in sex-reversed tribes is as specious as the nineteenth-century belief in blood-deprived ovaries), and some are found in other primates. Men's and women's brains vary in numerous ways, including the receptors for sex hormones. Variations in these hormones, especially before birth, can exaggerate or minimize the typical male and female patterns in cognition and personality. Boys with defective genitals who are surgically feminized and raised as girls have been known to report feeling like they are trapped in the wrong body and to show characteristically male attitudes and interests. And a meta-analysis of 172 studies by psychologists Hugh Lytton and David Romney in 1991 found virtually no consistent difference in the way contemporary Americans socialize their sons and daughters. Regardless of whether it explains the gender disparity in science, the idea that some sex differences have biological roots cannot be dismissed as Neanderthal ignorance.

Since most sex differences are small and many favor women, they don't necessarily give an advantage to men in school or on the job. But Summers invoked yet another difference that may be more consequential. In many traits, men show greater variance than women, and are disproportionately found at both the low and high ends of the distribution. Boys are more likely to be learning disabled or retarded but also more likely to reach the top percentiles in assessments of mathematical ability, even though boys and girls are similar in the bulk of the bell curve. The pattern is readily explained by evolutionary biology. Since a male can have more offspring than a female—but also has a greater chance of being childless (the victims of other males who impregnate the available females)—natural selection favors a slightly more conservative and reliable baby-building process for females and a slightly more ambitious and error-prone process for males. That is because the advantage of an exceptional daughter (who still can have only as many children as a female can bear and nurse in a lifetime) would be canceled out by her unexceptional sisters, whereas an exceptional son who might sire several dozen grandchildren can more than make up for his dull childless brothers. One doesn't have to accept the evolutionary explanation to appreciate how greater male variability could explain, in part, why more men end up with extreme levels of achievement.

WHAT ARE WE to make of the breakdown of standards of intellectual discourse in this affair—the statistical innumeracy, the confusion of fairness with sameness, the refusal to glance at the scientific literature? It is not a disease of tenured radicals; comparable lapses can be found among the political right (just look at its treatment of evolution). Instead, we may be seeing the operation of a fascinating bit of human psychology.

The psychologist Philip Tetlock has argued that the mentality of taboo—the belief that certain ideas are so dangerous that it is sinful even to think them—is not a quirk of Polynesian culture or religious superstition but is ingrained into our moral sense. In 2000, he reported asking university students their opinions of unpopular but defensible proposals, such as allowing people to buy and sell organs or auctioning adoption licenses to the highest-bidding parents. He found that most of his respondents did not even try to refute the proposals but expressed shock and outrage at having been asked to entertain them. They refused to consider positive arguments for the proposals and sought to cleanse themselves by volunteering for campaigns to oppose them. Sound familiar?

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The psychology of taboo is not completely irrational. In maintaining our most precious relationships, it is not enough to say and do the right thing. We have to show that our heart is in the right place and that we don't weigh the costs and benefits of selling out those who trust us. If someone offers to buy your child or your spouse or your vote, the appropriate response is not to think it over or to ask how much. The appropriate response is to refuse even to consider the possibility. Anything less emphatic would betray the awful truth that you don't understand what it means to be a genuine parent or spouse or citizen. (The logic of taboo underlies the horrific fascination of plots whose protagonists are agonized by unthinkable thoughts, such as *Indecent Proposal* and *Sophie's Choice*.) Sacred and tabooed beliefs also work as membership badges in coalitions. To believe something with a perfect faith, to be incapable of apostasy, is a sign of fidelity to the group and loyalty to the cause. Unfortunately, the psychology of taboo is incompatible with the ideal of scholarship, which is that any idea is worth thinking about, if only to determine whether it is wrong.

At some point in the history of the modern women's movement, the belief that men and women are psychologically indistinguishable became sacred. The reasons are understandable: Women really had been held back by bogus claims of essential differences. Now anyone who so much as raises the question of innate sex differences is seen as "not getting it" when it comes to equality between the sexes. The tragedy is that this mentality of taboo needlessly puts a laudable cause on a collision course with the findings of science and the spirit of free inquiry. ■

Withdraw from Iraq this year.

Save the Date

BY SPENCER ACKERMAN

On September 23, shortly after interim Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi insisted to a joint session of Congress that "we are succeeding" in Iraq, I met with one of his subordinates in an Arlington hotel. Thamir Al Adhami, the spokesman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had traveled to Washington not as part of Allawi's entourage, but to participate in a nation-building seminar for Iraqi officials sponsored by the U.S. Institute of Peace. With his elegant cream-colored suit and expensive eyewear, Adhami represented an Iraqi middle class under extreme pressure. Hundreds of Baghdad professionals, the backbone of an Iraqi civil society, have been assassinated by insurgents since the April 2003 fall of Saddam Hussein, prompting thousands more to emigrate. Working for the interim government is especially hazardous: Around the hotel's lunchtime buffet, several of Adhami's colleagues chatted casually about the death threats they have received.

After Allawi's speech, President Bush insisted that the United States would "stay the course" against the insurgency. I asked Adhami what would happen to the insurgency—and the prospect of a free Iraq—if the 137,000 American troops then occupying his country came home. Considering Allawi's forceful declaration of solidarity with Bush just a few hours earlier, I expected Adhami to answer that the United States couldn't possibly leave without wiping out the insurgent sanctuary of Falluja or expediting the preparation of Iraqi security forces. I was wrong. Adhami replied that, while an immediate pullout would be disastrous, the United States needed to loudly set a date for withdrawal. "I tend to believe that [you need] to give them"—the insurgents—"at least a light at the end of the tunnel," he said. "If you say, 'We are staying as long as it takes,' well, God knows how long it will take. That means, 'We are staying here permanently.' "

It was a candid—and rare—admission that the U.S. presence in Iraq, considered essential by many to keeping chaos at bay and lifting democracy to its feet, has become an obstacle to establishing a free Iraq. Though the insurgency consists of divergent factions with divergent goals—some fight to restore Baathist tyranny, others to impose Salafist rule—most are simply nationalists, fighting for no discernable ideological motivation beyond a hatred of the U.S. occupation. It's a popular position among the country's Sunni Arab population, the formerly dominant minority estimated to represent 20 percent of Iraqis. According to a Zogby poll released last week, 83 percent of Sunnis want the United States to leave imminently, and 53 percent actually consider attacks on American troops legitimate. This popular support, which provides the insurgency everything from passive cooperation to guerrilla recruits, deepens every day that American troops remain in Iraq, and it prevents those troops from dealing the insurgency a final defeat.

Recognizing—and reversing—this dynamic is the last chance we have to salvage a decent and democratic outcome for Iraq. Adhami wasn't giving up hope by envisioning a U.S. withdrawal. He was considering it a prerequisite for success. This is true despite the inspiring sight of Iraqis braving death to cast their ballots in Sunday's election. Although Iraq's Shia majority and Kurdish minority overwhelmingly embraced the vote, Sunnis apparently voted in

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significantly smaller numbers, indicating that it did little to quell the restiveness made manifest in the insurgency. A State Department poll in December found that only 12 percent of Sunnis considered the coming election legitimate. This is hardly surprising, given that the Association of Muslim Scholars, an umbrella group claiming the allegiance of 3,000 Sunni mosques, argues that no election under occupation is legitimate—a contention it repeated after the vote. And given that the parliament elected Sunday will craft Iraq's constitution, disputes over the body's legitimacy could split the country along ethnic and religious lines. As Adnan Pachachi, a Sunni former member of the U.S.-appointed Iraqi Governing Council, argued in *The Washington Post* last month, "Very few scenarios take us deeper into chaos and civil unrest than this very likely outcome."

Iraq's Sunni and Shia Arabs are united by one thing: their desire to be rid of the occupation. In the Shia areas of Iraq, sermons and political speeches rallied support by painting the elections as a mechanism to expel the United States from the country. Association of Muslim Scholars leader Harith Al Dhari, who met with American occupation officials last month, demanded a timetable for U.S. departure—something the leading Shia candidates' slate, the United Iraqi Alliance, campaigned on until the final week of the election. That doesn't mean the United States should unilaterally withdraw. But, if the United States brokered an accord with the new Iraqi government to bring the troops home—preferably in a staggered fashion and by the end of the year—it would hand the fledgling Iraqi government perhaps its largest opportunity for sectarian reconciliation: the ability to say that democracy, not violence, secured the end of the occupation for the benefit of all Iraqis. More than any other policy option, such a move has the potential to fracture the radical Baathist and Salafist elements of the insurgency from the insurgency's broader, nationalist base of support, enabling an Iraqi counterinsurgency campaign to fight the true "dead-enders."

To be sure, withdrawal will not by itself keep the political process alive. The (probably) Shia-led government will have to make reconciliation a priority, the Sunnis will have to decide the political process is in their interests, and the residual insurgency will have to be destroyed. But, for any of that to occur, the occupation has to end. Which is why supporters of the Iraq war in particular—and especially those who, like me, backed the war in the hopes that democracy would take hold in Baghdad—should want our troops to come home, and soon.

Lieutenant General Lance Smith, the deputy chief of Central Command, had an unpleasant assignment on November 19. He had to publicly contradict his three-star colleague, John Sattler, the top Marine commander in Iraq, who had told reporters the previous day that the U.S. invasion of Falluja had "broken the back of the insurgency ... disrupt[ing] them ... across the country." More unpleasant still was Smith's concession the next month that the insurgency "is becoming more effective." Then, in January, insurgents successfully assassinated several senior Iraqi officials, including the governor of Baghdad. In less than one week that month, their improvised explosive devices destroyed two Bradley Fighting Vehicles, fully armored and weighing 25 tons each. And, even before the heightened brutality that preceded the elections—when the largely frustrated insurgency still murdered 44 people—an average of 75 attacks took place each day. That's about as many as before the Falluja operation.

All of which appears to have led American commanders to question whether they can actually defeat the insurgency. "The day after the elections, the insurgency will still be there," a senior officer told the *Los Angeles Times*. "And it will continue for several years to come." What's more, at least some American civilian and military officials in Iraq and at the Pentagon recognize that "U.S. troops might be undermining the legitimacy of the Iraqi interim government and creating the impression that an unpopular occupation will continue indefinitely," as *The Wall Street Journal* recently reported. As a result, commanders say they're changing their strategy, shifting thousands of troops away from combat duty toward training Iraqi security forces. "Training Iraqis is the whole nine yards right now," a senior administration official told the *Los Angeles Times* last month. "We can't stay in front on this over the long haul and be successful," General George Casey, the top American commander in Iraq, said late last month. "We're viewed by the people ... as an occupation force."

But the new security approach is basically the old security approach—only allegedly faster. The United States will train and equip Iraqis so that our troops can pass the security baton to them. And Bush, in his postelection remarks on Sunday, emphasized that U.S. forces will remain in Iraq until that point: "We will continue training Iraqi security forces so this rising democracy can eventually take responsibility for its own security." But simply training them faster is unlikely to bring that goal any closer. Because the U.S. presence helps the insurgency's recruitment efforts, the finish line keeps receding into the distance.

That's why, at several points over the past 18 months, the United States has revised its assessments of necessary Iraqi forces upward, in terms of both size and capability. In late 2003, American officials in Iraq estimated a need for 85,000 Iraqi police. The Pentagon increased that number by a third last September, to 135,000. Early occupation plans called for an Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) to conduct internal anti-militant missions, sized at 25,000 troops. By November 2003, that number had risen to 40,000; after the ICDC's poor performance in Falluja the following April, it was disbanded and reformed as the Iraqi National Guard, with its needed end-strength reassessed in September 2004 at nearly 62,000—more than twice its original estimate. Recently, officials announced plans to fold the National Guard into the new Iraqi Army; earlier this month, Allawi announced that he needed to raise the target number for that newly restructured army

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from 100,000 to 150,000 soldiers. In August 2004, officials quietly conducted a reappraisal of Iraq's security needs, after which, writes *Globalsecurity.org* analyst John Pike, "the objective end-strength of Iraqi forces appear[ed] to have more than doubled."

And with good cause. Last month, Allawi's intelligence chief, General Muhammed Abdullah Shahwani, stated that the insurgency at all levels—from actual fighters to the citizens who help them—has grown to over 200,000 people, with a commensurate increase in lethality. While it's unclear whether Shahwani's assessment is accurate, it's an order of magnitude larger than U.S. estimates. A significant part of that growth is attributable to Sunnis furious at the prolonged occupation. *Guardian* Baghdad correspondent Rory McCarthy recently interviewed an insurgent known as Abu Rahman, who exemplified this dynamic. Initially, the 25-year-old gave "thanks to the Americans for getting rid of Saddam," but the occupation inflamed his patriotism and his religious sensibilities to the point that "the idea of jihad came step by step as I watched what the Americans were doing to our country."

The infusion of Abu Rahmans into the insurgency has created the need for more Iraqi security forces to combat them. Consequently, the gap between the actual number of Iraqi security forces and the target number of Iraqi security forces has expanded: Pike estimates that, between October 2003 and November 2004, the deficit increased by 89,600 missing troops. As a result, the United States needs to stay in Iraq longer to make up the shortfall, further delaying the day when the security baton may be passed. Defense expert Anthony Cordesman estimates that Iraqis won't be able to assume full security responsibilities until late 2006. And, if this pattern continues, another two years of occupation will further roil Iraq to the point where the number of Iraqi policemen and other security forces needed will rise yet again, necessitating a further U.S. commitment to prepare them for duty. This vicious circle is why retired Army Colonel Michael Hess, a veteran of the Bosnia nation-building mission, told the *Post*, "The longer you are anywhere, the more difficult it becomes." Or, as Donald Rumsfeld once famously wrote his staff about the war on terrorism, "The harder we work, the 'behinder' we get."

THE SOLUTION ISN'T to give up on the Iraqi security forces. It is to fracture the insurgency so that the security forces have a more manageable task. The nationalist insurgents seeking an end to foreign domination of Iraq must be divided from the radicals seeking to impose either Baathist or hard-line Islamist rule.

A negotiated U.S. withdrawal could accomplish just that. Sunnis who live in insurgent-held territory—that is, parts of the country where the U.S. presence is negligible or nonexistent—have often come to reject the agendas of the Baathists or the Salafists, who share Osama bin Laden's vision of a state based on "authentic" Islam. In Latifiyah, for example, when fighters demanded last November, under penalty of death, that schools close down in solidarity with the Fallujan insurgents, the populace was disgusted. "Around 400 students aren't getting an education and 15 teachers are sitting at home with nothing to do because of the mujahedin. What good does that do?" asked primary school headmaster Anwar Ismail. And, as Karl Vick of the *Post* reported, even in Falluja, once a stronghold of the insurgency, many locals were offended by the insurgents' "stern brand of Islam." The commander of a largely nationalistic insurgent outfit told Vick, "Please do not mix the cards. There is an Iraqi resistance, a genuine resistance, and there are other groups trying to settle accounts."

The trouble is that, as long as the United States remains in Iraq, Sunni frustration with the insurgency will pale in comparison to Sunni anger at their occupiers, and fracturing the base of the insurgency will be all but impossible. Worse, there are already signs that the Sunnis' anger at the illegitimacy of the occupation is metastasizing into anger at the political process itself, which is perceived as designed to empower the Shia at the Sunnis' expense. Mohammed Faik Riffat of the moderate Iraqi Islamic Party bitterly told the *Journal* recently, "They [the Americans] care only about putting the Shiites in power over us," a perception fueled not only by the election—which took place despite Sunni pleas for postponement—but the relative distribution of U.S. reconstruction aid, which has tended to favor the Shia.

Riffat's message resounds in Sunni mosques around Iraq. A preacher at the Um Al Qura Mosque in Baghdad routinely blames the United States for striving to keep Sunnis "poor, ignorant, and divided." During the U.S. invasion of Falluja, Sunni clerics lashed out at Shia religious leaders loyal to Grand Ayatollah Ali Al Sistani for staying silent in the face of the U.S. attack. The notion that the Shia are in league with the United States was so potentially incendiary that a Sistani aide refuted it at length to *Al Hayat* last month. Political analyst (and secular Shia politician) Ghassan Al Atiya observed that the Sunnis may be saying to themselves, "What do we have to lose if we cause mayhem? We are bound to be dominated by the Shia anyway." As Atiya put it, "This would be the beginning of sectarian war."

We may have already heard its warning shots. In early December, a new Shia militia calling itself the Brigades of Fury fought Sunni insurgents outside of Latifiyah with rocket-propelled grenades and assault rifles, leaving more than 20 combatants dead. It's doubtful that the Brigades received Sistani's blessing for the attack. But, while Sistani and the United Iraqi Alliance have denounced ethnic conflict, Sunni assaults on the Shia—often in the form of attacking Shia truck drivers or security force recruits—are increasingly trying Shia patience. "How long can we be patient in the face of these crimes that are happening every day?" Shia preacher Jalaledin Saghir asked in a recent sermon. In June, a convoy of Shia truckers were murdered and their bodies mutilated, allegedly on the orders of Fallujan insurgent leaders reportedly tied to Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, the bin Laden affiliate who has advocated civil war.

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As Tish Durkin reported for *National Journal*, the murders were to punish the Shia for collaborating with the United States. If this dynamic continues, the political process itself—tied to the Americans, benefiting the Shia—could become the engine of the insurgency.

IF A POTENTIAL civil war is tied to the perception that the Shia are the tools of the American occupiers, there are reasons for both hope and fear. Much remains unclear about Shia plans for Iraq (especially the role they want Islam to play in governance), but they have hardly been subtle about their preferred relationship with the United States. In December, outside Baghdad's Kadhimiya shrine, a banner read, ELECTIONS ARE THE IDEAL WAY TO EXPEL THE OCCUPIER FROM IRAQ. A Shia mobile phone salesman told a *Chicago Tribune* reporter in November, "This election, for me, will be the happiest moment in my life, because it means we will end the occupation." Anti-occupation sentiment played a significant role in the Shia insistence on holding elections on schedule, regardless of the security danger. Nadeem Al Jabbery, the leader of the Shia Fadhila Party and a Baghdad professor, told a reporter, "If we don't have elections or an elected government, then the Americans will stay and our problems will continue." According to last week's Zogby poll, 68 percent of Shia respondents want the United States out either immediately or after the elected government takes office.

Moreover, despite the resentment that anti-Shia violence has aroused toward the insurgency, the top contenders for Shia political leadership are still emphasizing the need for a united Iraq. The United Iraqi Alliance places national unity atop its political agenda. "Our group believes in sharing power with all Iraqi factions," top Alliance candidate Abdul Aziz Al Hakim said at a Baghdad press conference last month. "We have rejected the idea of a sectarian regime, and we believe that Iraq is for all Iraqis." In the interview Sistani's aide gave to *Al Hayat*, he said, "The center of religious authority [i.e., Sistani] is eager that all participate in drafting the constitution," adding that "the representation of our Sunni brethren in the coming government must be effective, regardless of the results of the elections."

Fortunately, in recent days, several Sunni notables who reject the election have signaled their willingness to participate in drafting the constitution. "The elections are one matter; the constitution is another," Sheik Moayad Ibrahim Al Adhami of the Association of Muslim Scholars told *The New York Times*. Reportedly, the Association has stated that it would accept a Shia-led government's legitimacy—if it truly secured a timetable for ending the occupation. So, not only is the U.S. presence helping to cultivate and unite the Sunni insurgency, it is also jeopardizing the possibility of bringing the Sunnis into the political process that will establish Iraq's permanent government.

That's not all a prolonged U.S. presence jeopardizes. Staying has political implications for the Shia as well. Less than 30 percent of Shia told Zogby that they support predicating U.S. withdrawal on establishing Iraqi security forces—precisely the position the Alliance adopted last week. With Sistani backing the election to the hilt, it's difficult to believe that Shia popular support for the political process can deteriorate as rapidly as support for the Allawi interim government did. But that's not to say that the Shia consensus behind the process is stable. For example, Moqtada Al Sadr is expertly positioned to shatter the consensus, and a prolonged occupation affords him his biggest opportunity.

The violent Shia cleric, who seeks to displace Sistani as the supreme Shia authority, has telegraphed his intention to paint the moderate Shia leadership as U.S. puppets. In December, he challenged "our great religious authorities and leaders [to] take a pledge from the occupation, its followers, and unjust armies to leave the country and have a schedule for their departure immediately after elections." The Alliance's decision last week to abandon its call for negotiating a U.S. withdrawal may be understandable, but it cedes a powerful issue to Sadr for his exploitation—after all, many Shia supported the Alliance in no small measure to end the occupation. And, if Sadr can succeed in fracturing Shia unity, Shia politics may not remain very moderate for very long: Sadr's politics tend toward Iranian-style theocracy.

OF COURSE, ANY withdrawal strategy carries with it tremendous risk. Although American troops are currently unable to stop a rising tide of violence, their absence, some fear, could precipitate an overwhelming escalation of chaos: The insurgency could overrun the government and seize control of the country; fighters from neighboring countries could flood Iraq to fill the U.S. vacuum; a civil war could break out; the jihadists could score a propaganda victory over the United States. And any responsible consideration of withdrawal has to assume that, in the immediate term, security will deteriorate. But these nightmare scenarios are unlikely to result in the wake of U.S. departure. In fact, some are more likely to occur if we stay.

While the insurgency can replenish itself and fight the United States and the Iraqi government to exhaustion, there's little chance it could actually hold onto power, even if it managed to grab it in the wake of a U.S. troop withdrawal. The second Baath coup in 1968, as Charles Tripp underscores in his *History of Iraq*, succeeded because it seized Iraq's sizeable existing state security apparatus and duplicitously convinced the Shia clerical establishment that the Shia wouldn't be persecuted—neither of which is possible today. Neither could the largely foreign Salafists—who are a distinct minority in the insurgency—impose their rule on Iraq: Their brand of Islam was too caustic to gain support even in Falluja. Significant regional intervention is a similarly unlikely proposition. Not one of Iraq's Sunni Arab neighbors is willing to lend vocal support to the insurgency, much less material aid. Intervention, if it occurs, is likely to be limited to governments like Syria's turning a blind eye to money or weapons crossing their borders, which we can't stop

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even with the 150,000 troops we have in Iraq now. Turkey would have to give up on its ambition to join the European Union if it invaded the Kurdish north. Iran will have little reason to ratchet up its intervention if, as is likely, the new Iraqi government is significantly Shia: Tehran's mullahs implored Iraqi exiles in Iran to vote for the United Iraqi Alliance.

The prospects for outright civil war and for jihadist propaganda victory, however, are significant. But they're far more likely if the United States stays than if we leave. The Sunnis, 82 percent of whom want the United States out in short order, could continue to direct their anger at the occupation to what they increasingly see as its Shia beneficiaries. Conversely, the Shia, 68 percent of whom want the U.S. to leave Iraq expeditiously, could grow frustrated with their more moderate leadership—which cautions patience with both the United States and the Sunnis—and answer Sunni attacks in kind. Similarly, the global Salafist jihad gains much more with the United States in Iraq than out. As the U.S. National Intelligence Council recently assessed, the occupation is providing the jihad with both a rallying cry and a training ground. It's true that the Salafists will declare victory if the U.S. withdraws. But they will declare victory no matter what, as bin Laden did after Tora Bora. What's crucial from a U.S. propaganda perspective is to create a counterexample: To say the democratic political process, and not insurgent violence, ended the occupation.

None of this is to suggest that the short-term security picture won't worsen if the U.S. withdraws. It's clear that, even if the occupation ends, the insurgency won't. Although the nationalist bulk of the insurgency will likely dissipate, the Baathist and Salafist elements will remain. And, if the barbarity of their preelection attacks is any indication, they will fight even more ferociously if the political process receives Sunni legitimacy. "Are [Iraqi security forces] capable of taking over the counterinsurgency campaign themselves right now today? The answer's no," General Casey recently told reporters. He's right. Against a growing insurgency, a force built from scratch faces a Herculean task. But, against a fractured insurgency, deprived of those supporters who simply see it as the quickest way to an independent Iraq, it has a real chance. Without a united Sunni front against occupation, the residual extremist elements—which have little support among Sunnis—would lose their growth potential. They would likely have a much more difficult time of attracting new recruits, moving resources around the country, and maintaining operational secrecy.

STRANGE AS IT may seem, the Bush administration once accepted that the occupation bolstered the insurgency at the expense of Iraqi democracy. The inextricability of Iraqi self-determination and security was its entire rationale for the June 28 transfer of sovereignty to Allawi's interim government. In November 2003, the administration assessed that, unless the occupation ended rapidly, the political process the occupation was supposed to shepherd would collapse under the weight of anti-occupation outrage. "Full sovereignty will give Iraqis a direct interest in the success of their own government," Bush explained in May 2004 at the Army War College. Furthermore, the administration argued, if the occupation ended, the nationalist element to the insurgency would see its cardinal raison d'être disappear. As Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage observed on the date of the handover, "Those who are ... formally fighting against the coalition in Iraq are now fighting against an Iraqi government and Iraqis themselves."

The problem was that the administration substituted its own definitions of sovereignty and occupation for the ones Iraqis understand. On June 28, the United States disbanded the political arm of the occupation, the Coalition Provisional Authority, but it kept 137,000 troops indefinitely stationed on Iraqi soil. Not surprisingly, it took only a few days for insurgent attacks to return to their pre-handover levels of 35 to 40 daily engagements. And, by October, 65 percent of Iraqis told International Republican Institute pollsters that the interim government didn't represent their interests.

Whether the Bush administration will make the same mistake again remains to be seen, but the early indications are not promising. The United States may be hurrying to train troops, but Lieutenant General James Lovelace recently stated that the Army expected 120,000 troops to remain in Iraq through 2006—hardly a sign that the occupation is coming to a close. One Pentagon proposal, modeled after the so-called death squads used against the Salvadoran guerrillas in the 1980s, is to prepare Shia and Kurdish commandos who would target Sunni civilians as well as insurgents. "The Sunni population is paying no price for the support it is giving the terrorists," a military official involved in the debate told *Newsweek*. "From their point of view, it is cost-free. We have to change that equation." While the option is reportedly still under discussion, it indicates that some Pentagon officials are not only acquiescing to the idea of civil war, they're urging the United States to take sides.

It's not sadism that motivates administration officials to advocate staying in Iraq. It's a deep belief in the mission—to bring democracy to Baghdad—and the similarly deep belief that, unless U.S. soldiers and Marines lend muscle to the nascent government, the mission will fail. But there are many ways the mission—that is, the creation of an inclusive, democratic Iraqi political process—can fail, and the most serious of them are predicated on the United States staying, not leaving. Whether the Bush administration realizes this is one of the greatest unknowns of an opaque situation. And the administration's apparent confusion is felt, and felt deeply, by the 150,000 troops it has sent to Iraq. "The general feeling among a lot of guys is that they wonder why we're here, or at least why we're still here, or what our mission is," Army Specialist Justin Crawford recently told the *Post*. Bush needs to tell Crawford clearly: Your mission is to enable Iraq to have a stable and democratic future. And that's why you're coming home. ■

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Fight over flight.

Staying Power

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

WITH THE INCREASING violence leading up to this week's Iraqi elections for 275 seats in a new national assembly, a despair emerged in some U.S. circles that 150,000 American troops and their coalition allies could never really maintain security. If one could not always get to and from the Baghdad airport without being fired upon, how could Iraqis adjudicate a nationwide election? If the old conventional wisdom held that long-awaited Iraqi autonomy would undermine support for the terrorists, the new gloomy prognosis was that endemic violence and Sunni boycotts would nullify the significance of the elections or perhaps that a Shia-dominated, wild-card national assembly would circumscribe U.S. military options and play into the hands of Iran. "No matter how the voting turns out," *Newsweek*'s Fareed Zakaria recently wrote, "the prospects for genuine democracy in Iraq are increasingly grim."

Now, even though the elections on January 30 proved to be mostly free of violence and saw good turnouts, the old pessimism remains. John Kerry warned Tim Russert on "Meet the Press," "[N]o one in the United States should try to overhype this election." *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert admonished us the day after the vote that nothing was really changed. Consequently, we are still pondering calls either to leave Iraq—confessing defeat or claiming that we have already won by removing Saddam Hussein—or de facto to trisect the country.

I. Flight?

DAYS BEFORE THE elections began, Senator Ted Kennedy urged us to announce when American troops were leaving and to make the date sooner rather than later. Yet such withdrawal would be an abject disaster. As in the case of the precipitous departure from Vietnam, when millions were abandoned to be jailed, executed, or to take to the sea, Iraqi civilian reformers would be hard-pressed to fend for themselves against hard-core former Baathists and jihadists. For the near future, there are simply not enough properly trained Iraqi troops to allow for a substantial U.S. withdrawal anytime soon. Lebanon of the 1970s or Algeria of the 1990s would be the model for the ensuing sectarian warfare, with all the predictable fallout throughout the Gulf. And, just as the Cambodian holocaust, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Central American insurgency, and the Iranian hostage-taking followed from the scenes of U.S. helicopters taking off from the embassy roof in Saigon, so, too, we should expect all the progress achieved in Libya and Pakistan to erode and reformist pressure on Egypt, Palestine, and Saudi Arabia to cease—to the applause of everyone from Al Qaeda cells to Iran, Syria, and China.

Rapid departure would break our word to those who believed in a democratic Iraq; it would undermine the morale of our armed forces for decades, much as the fall of South Vietnam did. Of all people, our generation should know the consequences of timidity: A humiliating withdrawal from Beirut and Mogadishu, coupled with weak or nonexistent responses to dozens of subsequent terrorist attacks, emboldened the terrorists who carried out the September 11 attacks. On the other hand, the perception of American success in guaranteeing legitimate elections in Iraq and our willingness to stick it out—not announcements of withdrawal—prompted the Europeans to promise increased efforts in training Iraqi security forces. George W. Bush's resolve, not Kennedy's prognosis, encouraged French President Jacques Chirac to tell the president that the election "was an important stage in the political reconstruction of Iraq" and that "the strategy of terrorist groups [had] partly failed."

II. Withdrawal to the North and South?

THE SECOND FALLBACK alternative, advocated by the Council on Foreign Relations's Leslie Gelb, among others, at first glance seems more logical. The Kurds and the Shia are not vehemently anti-American. They have sources of economic support from the country's oil reserves in their environs, where there is relatively little violence. They comprise roughly 70 to 80 percent of the population, and there is something absurd about the new Iraq being held hostage by Sunni and Saddamite diehards who cry over the unfairness of the very election process that they have done so much to subvert.

Retreating to Kurdistan and the south might in theory allow us the relative tranquility to develop a real Iraqi army, which we could enhance with U.S. Special Forces and air power when it reemerged to take on the insurgents. Yet grave problems arise with such a scenario as well. Not all Sunnis can be so easily characterized as anti-democratic by either their mere geographical residence or their religion, nor should they be left to fend for themselves in a lawless enclave. Even if sensational reports of 200,000 insurgents are true, the vast majority of millions of Sunnis still have not taken up arms, but rather are unsure who or what will be running their towns in the future.

Thus, to abdicate the Sunni Triangle would only encourage the insurgents and create a permanent haven for Sunni and Wahhabi extremism throughout the region—in the manner that our earlier pullback from Falluja this past spring became a propaganda victory for the terrorists and

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provided a base of operations for Islamic radicals. Those Americans who courageously retook Falluja did not bleed and die only to abandon it a few months later. Indeed, ceding control over the Sunni Triangle, even if temporarily, would only postpone the problem of confronting and defeating the Islamists and former Baathists. Such withdrawal is the last choice, and we are not at the point of making it yet—especially in the wake of an election generally acknowledged to have been successful.

III. Sticking with Democracy

THE THIRD AND best alternative is to continue on the present path of countrywide reconstruction in hopes that the democratic process will begin to create a momentum of its own—as we have seen in the scenes of genuine postelection rejoicing. Soon there will be a psychological shift as Iraqis begin to blame other Iraqis—rather than Americans—for shortfalls of power or gasoline and start to appreciate the difficulties that the United States has faced. And, contrarily, the praise for establishing the Arab world's first democratically elected nation will empower the reformers, as nationalists will gradually become less vulnerable to charges of collusion with the infidel. As *The New York Times* noted in the immediate aftermath of the recent vote, "Arab channels and newspapers greeted the elections as a critical event with major implications."

Eventual withdrawal is inherent in any U.S. position; yet leaving must be predicated on a stable Iraqi government that has the ability to protect itself. Afghanistan, not Connecticut or Carmel, should be our model. Elected interim leaders should work in association with a U.S. military presence that steadily devolves into air support and Special Forces, with conventional troops reserved for emergencies and the continued training of the Iraqi army. Rather than pull back from the Sunni Triangle, we should at least guarantee the new government that we will support Iraqi forces in pursuit of terrorists in any region of the country.

A Shia-dominated government, or Kurds in the north, may have no belly for continued battle; but we at least owe them U.S. military support to ratify their newly won freedom by defeating the Sunni insurgents. The elections brought clarity, and the Sunnis in their triangle will have the opportunity to distance themselves from the killers in their midst, accept the will of the majority, and join a new Iraq—or see conventional geographical lines emerge that will facilitate the overwhelming use of power in a war they cannot win. U.S. air dominance and Special Forces integrated with Iraqi units, under the auspices of an elected government with sealed borders and an improving economy, are the classic ingredients for successful counterinsurgency.

With elections and freedom accorded to the Shia and the Kurds, we must renew, not disavow, our efforts to help democratize the Middle East. Few here or abroad appreciate the implications of making a Kurd or a Shia equal to a Sunni. We are witnessing a monumental U.S. commitment to the perennial underclass of the Middle East, and such idealism should be appreciated for what it is—one of the most radical social and cultural upheavals since the American-sponsored emancipation of women in postwar Japan or our own civil rights movement of the 1960s.

We must cease to envision Iraq as an amazing three-week victory that has a thousand fathers, followed by an orphaned and messy reconstruction, as once-zealous hawks have bailed from the enterprise with the easy excuse that the lapses of Donald Rumsfeld, L. Paul Bremer, or "the Pentagon" mean that Iraqi democracy no longer warrants their principled support—as if victory in war were not always a matter of those who make the fewest errors rather than no errors at all. The truth is—and always was—that the war against Saddam and the ensuing efforts to rid Iraq of Baathists and Islamists exist on a continuum and must be seen in a larger historical context of defeating a fascist government, occupying a country of 26 million in the heart of the ancient caliphate, and then fostering democratic government where it has no history.

The loss so far of more than 1,100 combat dead is tragic, but, by historical standards of comparable operations, the U.S. achievement has been nothing short of miraculous. Our aggregate combat fatalities after 22 months in Iraq were often exceeded in single months during the Vietnam war or a single day at Normandy, in the Bulge—or on September 11. Such reckoning may seem callous, but it is the terrible arithmetic of war—and the United States should not delude itself: This is a real war.

WAR IS NOT static. The insurgents and terrorists count on bleeding the U.S. military while U.S. public support erodes and the Arab world rallies to the insurgents' cause. Thus they may see stalemate as victory. But the truth is more likely the opposite; if we persist, they will be forced to try to defeat us outright before larger trends inside and outside Iraq begin to nullify their indigenous support. As the United States has refined its tactics and learned more about the terrorists, its losses in recent weeks have fluctuated, but they are not steadily increasing from month to month. Meanwhile, American soldiers are killing or capturing more insurgents than before—15,000 in 2004, according to an estimate by General George Casey—who are now primarily confined to four of 18 provinces. At the same time, the Arab world is beginning to see elections take hold in the Islamic world—in Afghanistan, the West Bank, and now Iraq. And that fact will eventually be fatal for Al Qaeda and Baathists alike. We cannot appreciate these positive symptoms in our despair over the post-invasion period. But, often in conflicts, the deadliest moments—at Meuse-Argonne, the Bulge, or Okinawa—occur just before the enemy cracks. Our present course is unpopular, but it is bringing results. If we don't lose our confidence, this most recent successful election will begin to show proof of our past wisdom and persistence—and be followed by steady evolution toward Iraqi legitimacy, security, and, one day, friendship. ■

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Two Prisoners

WHEN THE STARS FADE, when the cosmos darkens, there will still be one spot of light on planet Earth. That light will be a film studio where they are shooting another picture about Napoleon.

Napoleon's effect on the world's publishing industry is unnerving: the number of books about him is beyond fantasy. His effect on the film world is certainly not comparable; still it looms. This country made nine films about him before sound arrived; since then he has been played by Charles Boyer and Marlon Brando. Just two years ago Britain sent us *The Emperor's New Clothes* with Ian Holm as Napoleon. (Holm had previously played a comic version of the role in *Time Bandits*.) As for France, suffice it to say that one of the landmarks in French film history is Abel Gance's *Napoléon* (1927). I have seen all these films, plus two Napoleons in the theater and one on television. But the most memorable Napoleon line is in *Madame Sans-Gêne* (1961), in which he figures but is not the center. The emperor's siblings are seated around a table. He distributes thrones to them and says, "We must keep Europe in the family."

MONSIEUR N
(Empire)

THE WOODSMAN
(Newmarket)

All the more credit then to René Manzor, who wrote **MONSIEUR N**, and to Antoine de Caunes, who directed it. Their film comes along after the flood. Disregarding all those previous films with an insouciance that their talents completely justify, Manzor and Caunes have lavished fervor and intensity on their picture as if this were the first time the subject had been touched, even though their story has an angle similar to the Holm film—Napoleon's possible escape from St. Helena. Laden as I was with Napoleonic experience, I was all the happier for the brio and—the only word—freshness of *Monsieur N*.

The film is set in two time planes, and it is up to us to decide which scenes are set in the present and which are in the future or the past. In 1816 on St. Helena, Napoleon has already been captive for six months. A new British commander, Sir Hudson Lowe, arrives to take over the forces, whose task is to see that there is not another Elba. Three thousand soldiers and eleven battleships guard the emperor, two of the ships constantly circling the island in opposite directions. One English officer has personally to check on the emperor's presence twice a day.

The English, says Lowe to his aide, Lieutenant Heathcote, are spending £8 million a year to seclude Napoleon, with a hint that the emperor's demise would be a benefit. The warders constantly suspect that their charge is planning an escape. (There is also an attempt by pirates to kidnap him.) These are the chief matters in one time plane. The other plane, twenty years later, actually opens the picture—a sequence in which Napoleon's coffin is exhumed to make sure that he is really in it—and that plane is woven through the film as we see what happened to some of the people who had been on St. Helena with the emperor.

The dialogue is in English and French: the chief English officers speak to Napoleon in French and are complimented by him on their fluency. Also there are some flurries in Italian between him and his attendant, a fellow Corsican. Unifying the whole is a voice-over in English, spoken by the former Lieutenant Heathcote as he looks back at St. Helena after twenty years.

Why does this film fascinate? Certainly it is not because of the plot, which must not here be disclosed but which is just about sufficient. The film holds us principally because of its Napoleon. Philippe Torreton doesn't perform the role: he exists. He exists so thoroughly that the historical magnitude of the situation grips us. Here is a man, one solitary man, who had Europe in his hands. (Latter-day comparisons are inescapable and, without any underscoring in the script, help to deepen the film.) Defeated and exiled once before, he had managed to return from Elba to France for the Hundred Days that almost re-established him. Now, as he broods and dines and sleeps and amuses himself with the wife of a general on his staff (with the general's compliance), he still seems fraught with power, deep, secret even when he is conversing, amused and irritated by the innate puniness of those who confine him. Torreton creates all this without posturing or bravado; he makes Napoleon chordal and complex.

Richard E. Grant, previously most noted for comedy (beginning with *Withnail & I*), plays Sir Hudson Lowe with all the weight of responsibility and the constant abrasive edge of that responsibility. Jay Rodan provides a perfectly competent Lieutenant Heathcote. Elsa Zylberstein is coolly seductive as Napoleon's comfort, and Stéphane Freiss is understandable as her husband. A young English woman who later attracts the emperor is given bloom by Siobhan Hewlett.

But the picture is certified even before it gets well under way by the acuity of Caunes's eye. The opening exhumation scene tells us in its texture that we are in the hands of a talent, and the exquisite camera work by Pierre Aïm sustains it. The sense of film as time machine, transporting us back into history, is engrossing. That atmosphere and the very look of *Monsieur N* strengthen its grip.

Caunes, who is in his fifties, has been a film actor since 1982 and has directed three previous features. More, please.

Pedophilia has not been quite as frequent a film topic as Napoleon, but neither is it a novelty. In fact, one of the film world's perdurable classics, Fritz Lang's *M*, is about a murderous pedophile. Others on the subject were *The Mark* (1961) and of course *Lolita* (twice—1962 and 1997).

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Now a young director named Nicole Kassell, who wrote the screenplay with Steven Fechter, presents **THE WOODSMAN**. The deliberately bland title—the pedophile gets a post-prison job in a lumberyard—is affixed to a simmering story. Walter has served a term for molesting a little girl. Now he is trying to re-organize his life from the inside out. He is not, in the vernacular sense, a criminal. He is a man with an affliction who is trying to make his way to and through normality.

The workings of the plot are neither surprising nor artificial: they seem to be Walter's fate—with a final hint of hope. The picture's essence is the performance of Kevin Bacon as Walter. Taciturn, grimly holding on to life with his fingertips, Walter is like someone carrying a vial of nitroglycerin within himself that he is trying not to upset. Sympathy for a pedophile is difficult, but surely comprehension may be possible, and Bacon evokes it. ■

Martha C. Nussbaum

The Founder

NEHRU: A POLITICAL LIFE
By Judith M. Brown
(Yale University Press, 407 pp., $35)

NEHRU: THE INVENTION OF INDIA
By Shashi Tharoor
(Arcade, 282 pp., $24.95)

I.

EARLY IN 2003, THE WEBsite *Samachar.com*, which digests Indian newspapers for foreign Indiaphiles, conducted a poll that asked, "Which Prime Minister has contributed most to India's development?" When I checked the numbers in February, incumbent prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was holding a huge lead with 596 votes, three times the number of his nearest rival. As for Jawaharlal Nehru, the chief architect of India's political system and its transition from colony to independent democracy, and the author of the speech about India's "tryst with destiny," which is as well known in India as Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is in the United States, a speech that similarly defines a nation in terms of the capacity for sacrifice and service—Nehru came in third, with a mere seventy-five votes. To judge from the expatriate community at least, Nehru's ideas had been roundly repudiated—though it was hard to say whether voters were applauding Vajpayee's record on foreign investment or his preference for a Hindu state. Coming less than a year after the mass killings of innocent Muslims in Gujarat, virtually condoned by Vajpayee and surely not protested, the vote did not express a robust commitment to minority civil rights.

Three months later, the voters of India expressed themselves very differently. They returned Nehru's Congress Party to power and roundly defeated Vajpayee's Bharatiya Janata Party, the party of Hindu nationalism. Sonia Gandhi, the widow of Nehru's grandson Rajiv Gandhi, declined the prime ministership in order to prevent the political process from being hijacked by the controversy over her foreign birth, but she still runs the party, and she has repeatedly stated that the electoral victory is a triumph for two central aspects of Nehru's vision of the state: the idea of equal respect for citizens of all religions, and the idea of a basic commitment to eradicating desperate conditions for the poor. It is clear that the votes for Nehru's legacy came in large numbers from poor rural areas, where voters, many of them illiterate (literacy rates are not much above 50 percent in the nation as a whole), vote with great commitment, overcoming many obstacles to get to the polls. Voter turnout in general elections in India is almost twice what it normally is in the United States; and this, too, is Nehru's legacy.

The biography of this extraordinary and controversial man is thus of more than historical interest. But what a difficult task it is to write his biography! Nehru lived for seventy-four years, from 1889 to 1964, and his life spanned the tumultuous period of resistance against British rule, the founding of the new nation, and the first fifteen years of its existence. In all these events he played a leading role, interacting with figures of his time who were as complex and historically significant as himself (notably Mahatma Gandhi, the Muslim leader Mohammed Ali Jinnah, and his own daughter Indira Gandhi, who succeeded him in power). The biography of Nehru must be at the same time a history of the nation and its leaders. And American readers know little about India's history, so a good biography of Nehru for the American public must be also a powerful narrative of largely unfamiliar historical events.

THE DIFFICULTY OF WRITING about Nehru is compounded by the fact that he himself was astoundingly prolific, which is not completely surprising, given that he spent more or less twenty years of his adult life in various British-run prisons, where reading and writing was virtually all there was to do. In particular, he is the author of a huge autobiography, first published in 1936, and thus including only the early portions of his political life, and of the monumental *The Discovery of India* (1945), with its sweeping coverage of Indian history, culture, and religion and its detailed commentary on British rule and the resistance to it. He also wrote thousands of letters, ranging from intimate love letters to paternal advice, political debate, and analysis of every kind. Even to read all that he wrote is a challenge to the biographer; but how to integrate it into a narrative unity?

And then there is the fact that Nehru is one of the supreme prose stylists of the English language in the twentieth century. What biographer's sentences would not look pedestrian by comparison to the serene yet deep emotion expressed in Nehru's will, as he asks that his ashes be thrown into the river Ganges:

> Smiling and dancing in the morning sunlight, and dark and gloomy and full of mystery as the evening shadows fall, a narrow, slow and graceful stream in winter and a vast, roaring thing during the monsoon, broad-bosomed almost as the sea, and with something of the sea's power to destroy, the Ganga has been to me a symbol and a memory of the past of

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> India, running into the present, and flowing on to the great ocean of the future.

Or flat by comparison to the wit of the man who wrote of prison life, "This close association in a barrack has most of the disadvantages of married life with none of its advantages." Or humdrum by comparison to the political rhetoric of the end of the "tryst with destiny" speech:

> And so we have to labour and to work, and to work hard, to give reality to our dreams. Those dreams are for India, but they are also for the world, for all the nations and peoples are too closely knit together today for any one of them to imagine that it can live apart. Peace is said to be indivisible, so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.

Even the apparent awkwardness of "and also is disaster" works: the sentence, which begins like a trumpet call, modulates to a darker, more mysterious sound.

Nor was Nehru a simple man psychologically, as you can begin to see from these scattered fragments. He was painfully self-scrutinizing, yet with an ungovernable temper; a famously urbane and delightful guest, yet rightly described by Gandhi as one of the loneliest men in India; unreservedly given to the service of others, yet aware of a powerful egotism in himself; hungry for love and connection, but aware that "I had been, and was, a most unsatisfactory person to marry." The writer who would convey this personality to the public must be possessed both of human insight and a powerful narrative gift. And he or she would have to be able to add something to the already extensive self-analysis of Nehru himself, who criticized his own hunger for power in an anonymous article published in the *Modern Review* in 1937 that called Nehru a modern Caesar who has "all the makings of a dictator in him," and who wrote so pointedly of his own strange mixture of emotion and detachment: "I have loved life and it attracts me still and, in my own way, I seek to experience it, though many invisible barriers have grown up which surround me; but that very desire leads me to play with life, to peep over its edges, not to be a slave to it, so that we may value each other all the more." (And did he, noticing so much, see the egotism in that conclusion, which sets him on a par with life itself?)

Not surprisingly, even the most gifted writers of his own era hardly knew what to say of, or to, him. Consider this peculiar public tribute from the poet Sarojini Naidu, the first female president of the Congress, on the occasion of Nehru's fiftieth birthday: "I do not think that personal happiness, comfort, leisure, wealth ... can have much place in your life.... Sorrow, suffering, anguish, strife, yes, these are the predestined gifts of life for you.... You are a man of destiny born to be alone in the midst of crowds—deeply loved, but little understood." Well, thank you very much. Naidu's statements are undoubtedly true in a way, but the biographer had better be able to do at least somewhat better than that.

It is clearly not impossible to write a biography of a complicated member of the Nehru family that meets all these challenges. Katherine Frank's biography of Indira Gandhi, which appeared in 2001, is an impressive success, weaving together acute psychological insight with a clear and compelling narrative of political events. Frank's emphasis is perhaps more on the personal and psychological than on the political, but there is a firm grasp of issues and policies, and political choices are illuminated from within, as Frank paints a telling portrait of a sickly child who took decades to realize her own strength, a woman who was treated as her father's son and called herself his "Indu-boy," and yet at the same time was treated by most of the dominant males around her as a weak woman and an outsider. Frank insightfully explains Indira's rigidity, her distrust of democratic deliberation and consultation, and her baneful tendency to rely on less than reliable members of her own family (especially her repellent younger son Sanjay) as growing out of her isolation in the male-dominated world of political conversation, and also out of her odd relationship to a father who wrote to her with enormous intimacy from jail but could rarely establish the same connection in person. Frank's book is hard to put down; it is highly accessible to people with little prior knowledge of India. And yet the more knowledgeable reader also comes away from it with a sense that new perspectives have been opened up. Indira is in one way an easier subject than Jawaharlal, because she did not write so much, or so well; but her father, too, emerges as a complex and compelling character in Frank's pages.

Unhappily, neither of these new biographies of Nehru offers nearly as much insight, psychological or political. Both have their virtues, and both are profoundly defective in different ways. Shashi Tharoor's book is a superficial popular life with no new research, not much analysis, and little psychological understanding. Tharoor addresses his book to the general reader who wants a rapid introduction. And so his biography is written with a glibness that belies the soul of its subject. Read it and you will get a vivid account of the main historical events and a general introduction to the life. You will also get an extremely superficial attack on Nehru's economic policies (Tharoor even gets facts wrong, attributing the start of economic reform to Narasimha Rao rather than Rajiv Gandhi), and a more substantial defense of Nehruvian religious pluralism, but simplistic still, in that it makes Jinnah the sole villain in the partitioning of India and Pakistan, not mentioning the rise of the Hindu right, and slighting the role of the British in fostering Muslim separatism. (Nehru never made that mistake: whenever he criticized Jinnah's religious communalism, he always mentioned the Hindu Mahasabha in the same sentence.) This is not a bad book for the American who knows little about India, but soon, if you are drawn in, you will need to turn to the man himself.

Judith Brown's scholarly tome is unsatisfactory for very different reasons. Unlike Tharoor's book, it contains lots of new material, including letters in the possession of Sonia Gandhi that were not available to other biographers. It also contains at least some political and economic analysis. The later, thematically organized chapters are reasonably good, though nothing useful is said about links to contemporary events. Brown's treatment of Nehru's economic policies is nuanced and reasonable. She is good on Nehru's commitment to women's equality, and on the obstacles that he faced. (Tharoor is superficial here, getting crucial facts and even names wrong.) Her treatment of religious issues is far more complex than Tharoor's, though marred by an equal failure to discuss the rise of the Hindu right.

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Brown's treatment of the Nehru-Gandhi relationship is particularly good, although she does not learn from this relationship that the question of what is "Western" and what is "Indian" in both men is a highly complex matter. Brown consistently treats reason and science as "Western" imports, and religion as a peculiarly "Eastern" preoccupation. Never mind that Gandhi tells us in his autobiography that two of the primary influences on his own religious thought were Ruskin and Tolstoy. Never mind that Nehru rightly emphasizes the richness and the prominence of the rationalist traditions in Indian religion and philosophy. Never mind that Nehru argues cogently that the British deliberately fostered the irrationalist strands in Hindu culture and religion and inhibited the rationalist, in order more securely to dominate a people who could not industrialize on their own without scientific development.

So Brown is not an entirely reliable guide on many matters, and one sometimes wonders what her relation to India actually is. Her simple concept of the "Western" would hardly survive an encounter with the Indian women's movement, for example, where women who cannot read and write, who have no televisions and no contact with "the West," are fighting hard for the very rights that the Nehru family is called "Western" for defending. Even on geography, Brown is hazy. She says, for example, that big cities in India look just like cities in "other modern countries": "Only in rural areas does it become apparent that the new and cosmopolitan is juxtaposed with far older economic and cultural patterns...." This sentence makes me suspect that Brown has not ventured far outside the more prosperous parts of Delhi and Mumbai; she could not have written it had she spent much time in Patna or Ahmedabad or Trivandrum.

But the cardinal flaw in Brown's book is her complete lack of any narrative gift. The early sections of the book are virtually unreadable, a mass of details thrown in with little organization but the chronological. One feels that Brown is simply overwhelmed by the material. Sometimes she puts a piece of information in a wrong and misleading place—as when she mentions Rammohun Roy's reforms of Hinduism in Bengal in the middle of a paragraph discussing early twentieth-century reforms, even though Roy lived from 1772 to 1833. (This is important,

When the Skies Part

Let patience have a new mettle of love
When the legions of unlivable hours marshal
And the long-rumoured war between good and evil
Seems loosed—no, between time and evil.

To look not too keenly, hear their battles not loudly.
The war is an ancient one which hurls
Time against time on to-morrow's fields—
Which consumes expectation, leaves to-day waiting.

Standing in the shadow of their shadow-world,
Let the cries and the thunders fall voiceless to earth,
And the flames reach to heaven, that top of hell,
Unexalted by our eyes, our amen.

Nor be haggard for an outcome, breath forborne.
When ghosts put on flesh and make bodies ghostly,
It is but how the dead light themselves home
As the living inherit nature.

If the glare blots our sight, if the sparks sting,
If nations gibber and ether tears
And a smell of scorching blows round the world,
As if at last doom were astir (perhaps?):

Shake off the dream, close in fulfilment,
Draw a finer circle and raise boundaries
More home-like unswelling, to stay the heart—
Lusting after better things than are.

Keep a yet more unanxious watch.
Think not to know wonders, learn truth from wild hours.
Let patience glow with its own inwrought lustre,
Not the startled reflection of time's faster burning.

LAURA RIDING

Laura Riding (1901–1991) rose to prominence as a poet during the 1920s. She moved to Europe in 1926, where she began a long creative and personal association with the English poet Robert Graves, primarily in Deya, Majorca. Forced to flee the island in 1936, the couple was in France when Riding wrote "When the Skies Part." The poem was written in October 1938, only days after Neville Chamberlain's return from Munich proclaiming "peace in our time," while effectively ceding the Sudetenland to Nazi Germany. Riding makes a direct response to what she saw as disastrously misplaced faith in diplomacy. "What is happening is not that war has been or is being averted, but the question forming itself more directly and immediately: not merely the method with evil, but who has clean enough hands to deal with it directly."

In a world where poets could still dream of doing good or being heard, she wrote that in France she and Graves "were busy sending out deep-breaking waves of assurance—and I hope something more positive than that, although one can't expect it to be visible among the goings and comings of Downing Street." In the 1940s, long separated from Graves, and as Laura (Riding) Jackson, she renounced the writing of poetry altogether.

This poem was discovered by Elizabeth Friedmann, her authorized biographer, in a collection of correspondence acquired by Cornell University in 1992. It will appear in *A Mannered Grace: The Life of Laura (Riding) Jackson*, to be published this winter by Persea Books. —*Glyn Maxwell*

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because getting the chronology straight would establish that crucial reforms—higher education for women, for example—were introduced earlier in India than in Britain, and would thus put paid to the simplistic equation of modern reform with "Westernization.") Sometimes we get a mass of details on minor issues; and then, when a really large issue arises, we may hear virtually nothing about it. The brutal massacre of Indian civilians in 1919 at Amritsar, in which the British army under General Dyer opened fire without warning on a peaceful unarmed crowd, is well and accurately described in Tharoor's book. Brown gives a blurry compressed account, with crucial facts totally omitted, including Nehru's role in the investigation and the fact that the crowd was peaceful and unarmed, and that the British fired without warning. A similar contrast can be observed in the two accounts of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination: Tharoor gives us all the information we need and tells the story in a simple, moving manner, whereas Brown does not even tell us that the assassin was a Hindu right-wing fanatic who objected to Gandhi's sympathy for Muslims. (She calls him "a young Hindu man.")

Both books have curious omissions. Neither has any discussion of Nehru's law minister, B. R. Ambedkar, an extraordinary man from the group formerly called "untouchables" and now known as "dalits." Thus a chance is missed to confront issues of caste in the founding, on which neither book is of much use. And most unfortunately of all, neither says anything about the third giant of Indian thought and culture, alongside Gandhi and Nehru, namely Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1905, is best known in the West as a mystical poet, but he was also many other things: novelist, story-writer, composer, choreographer, and, most important, educational reformer with a developed vision of how India could come to grips with issues of religious division through an education emphasizing critical and independent thinking, world understanding, and the arts. To contrast Tagore's vision with Nehru's is crucial if we want to see what went right and what went wrong.

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II.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU WAS BORN IN 1889, the only son of a prosperous liberal Kashmiri Brahmin family. His father Motilal, a lawyer, was a modernist and a reformer, comfortable with Muslims and mistrustful of all appeals to traditional religion. In Motilal's case it is not inaccurate to speak of Westernizing, since he required his children to study even Sanskrit texts in English translation, and dressed little Jawaharlal in a sailor suit, and encouraged the use of English nicknames for his two younger sisters. (Both became women of substantial achievement; one was the first woman president of the United Nations General Assembly.) At one point in the 1890s he decreed that no language other than English would be spoken in the home, despite the fact that his wife—a sickly woman, and traditionally religious—knew no English.

Jawaharlal was sent off to Harrow, where he was very happy. From Harrow he went on, in 1907, to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he studied chemistry, geology, and physics, graduating with a mediocre second-class degree. As important as any formal education that he received was his close relationship with his father, who in person and by letter deliberately cultivated Jawaharlal's capacity for argument, particularly on political topics. Resistance to British rule was growing, and Jawaharlal became increasingly radical in his views, ultimately influencing his moderate father to take a strong anti-British position. The Amritsar massacre radicalized many people who had previously been pro-British. (Tagore returned his knighthood.) Returning to India and taking up a career in law, Jawaharlal soon became close to Mahatma Gandhi and a staunch supporter of his non-cooperation movement. His influence within the Congress—the political movement that organized the struggle for independence—rapidly increased.

He also married, in 1916, seventeen-year-old Kamala Kaul, betrothed to him by family arrangement when she was only thirteen. Jawaharlal at first objected to an arranged marriage; when he yielded, he insisted that he and his betrothed should be allowed to get to know each other before marrying. Whether as a result or not, the marriage, though sorrowful on account of Kamala's ill health and premature death from tuberculosis in 1936, had great emotional depth. Kamala came to share her husband's passion for the cause of independence, and did valuable work for the cause when her health permitted. The sexual bond between them appears to have been deep, and perhaps increased over time. "Though we had sometimes quarreled and grown angry with each other," he later wrote, "we kept that vital spark alight, and for each one of us life was always unfolding new adventure and giving fresh insight into each other." Her death, in a sanatorium in Switzerland, brought him tremendous grief—all the more since his many years of imprisonment had deprived him so often of her company. Although he had affairs after her death—certainly with Sarojini Naidu's daughter Padmaja, perhaps later with his close friend Edwina, wife of Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy of India—he never remarried. He once wrote to Kamala from prison, "I am a traveler, limping along in the dark night. Why should I drag others into this darkness, however near or beloved they may be; why should they suffer the travails of the journey?"

WHILE STILL A YOUNG HUSband, in the 1920s, Jawaharlal became increasingly known as one of the leading pro-independence radicals of the Congress movement. He was frequently packed off to British jails, where he made a point of occupying himself with exercise, gardening, spinning (Gandhi's influence), and above all reading and writing. "I became obsessed with the thought of India," he records. Meanwhile, Gandhi was effectively mobilizing resistance through civil disobedience, most famously in the "salt march," in which he led a large group of followers on a long march to the sea, where he illegally made salt from seawater by allowing the water to evaporate in his hand, thus defying the British tax on salt. (This episode is described beautifully by Tharoor, badly by Brown.)

Nehru and Gandhi had a complex and troubled relationship. Nehru, ever the pragmatist, saw non-violence as only a tactic, and objected to a politics of unbending moral idealism. He also objected to Gandhi's romantic glorification of pre-industrial society, holding that India's future well-being required scientific, industrial, and technological development. During World War II, he and Gandhi had

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THIS POLITICIAN HAS ULTERIOR MOTIVES.
HE'S USING HIS POLITICAL POWER TO HELP THOSE WITH NONE.
They're out there. They look like you and me, but they're different. They've experienced firsthand the disparities, but also the possibilities for children growing up in low-income communities. They joined Teach For America and are now part of the growing force of leaders who are working to ensure that one day, all children in this country, no matter where they live, have an equal chance in life. And how could they not be part of such a movement? Teach For America is the national corps that calls on our nation's most outstanding college graduates to commit two years to teach in urban and rural public schools and to become lifelong leaders in the effort to expand opportunity for children. Visit www.teachforamerica.org for more information.
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a very serious quarrel over India's stance toward the Axis powers. Nehru hated fascism from the first. He saw it up close on visits to Europe in the 1930s, where he made a point of purchasing Jewish products. "Amazed and disgusted" by Chamberlain's policy of appeasement, he called it "the difficult and intricate game of how to betray your friend and the cause you are supposed to stand for on the highest moral grounds ... the utter collapse, in the moment of crisis, of all the so-called advanced people and groups." Summoned to a meeting with Mussolini in 1936, while in Italy, he refused, unwilling to let himself be used for fascist propaganda. Gandhi's much more equivocal stance included a willingness to support Japan if doing so would hurt the British; and Nehru found this horrifying. But the two remained deep friends and uneasy allies until Gandhi's assassination in 1948. Gandhi understood that Nehru was a practical politician of moral courage and superb practical perception; Nehru understood that Gandhi had an unparalleled capacity to inspire people for good ends, and he was deeply moved by the man always.

The piggish racism of the British during this period must be confronted to be believed, and Tharoor is ready to assist. He produces such gems as Churchill's remark "I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion," and his comment that Gandhi's visit to London involved the "nauseating" sight of "a seditious Middle Temple Lawyer ... striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal palace ... to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor." Tharoor also reminds us that Gandhi, told that Lord Irwin (then viceroy) always prayed to God before making any major decision, remarked, "What a pity God gives him such bad advice." If the British couldn't have a dependent India, they were determined to have a fragmented one, and both these books tell with sadness the story of how the British fostered the cause of Muslim separatism, initially against the wishes of the vast majority of Muslims, until sentiment became polarized and the two-nation "solution," with its vast bloodshed, was the result.

After Independence on August 15, 1947, the story continues for seventeen more years, as Nehru worked tirelessly to build democratic institutions and to forge a policy whose key features were secularism (meaning not separation of church and state, since four major religions were given substantial roles in lawmaking, but equal respect accorded to the religions), a foreign policy of nonalignment and internationalism, and a socialist economic policy. Nehru was no admirer of communism, which he criticized for its failure to protect essential freedoms of association, speech, conscience, and religious practice; but in economic policy he did believe that socialism, meaning state ownership of the means of production and considerable top-down planning, was the best route to prosperity. These policies all had their difficulties, but they succeeded remarkably well, in part thanks to Nehru's endless capacity for hard work, his high moral tone, and his absolute freedom from corruption. His own personal qualities played no small part in holding India together in the early days, and also in winning respect from the other nations of the world.

In the 1960s, age began to sap his famous vitality. To Indira, increasingly his consort and companion, he wrote, "The sense of the work to do, so little done, and ever less and less time to do it, oppresses." In 1964 he had two strokes, but he quickly resumed his usual routine. On May 17, he died in his sleep of a massive aortic rupture. On his bedside table were found, copied in his own hand, these lines of Robert Frost:

> The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
> But I have promises to keep,
> And miles to go before I sleep,
> And miles to go before I sleep.

III.

HOW SHOULD WE ASSESS Nehru's "invention of India"? Let us begin where he began: "My legacy to India? Hopefully, it is 400 million people capable of governing themselves." India's population now tops one billion, but that legacy remains firm. The institutional structure that Nehru helped to design, with its separation of powers, its conception of the Supreme Court as defender of fundamental rights, and its role for federalism and local governance, has withstood the test of time, including the very strenuous test supplied by Indira Gandhi's suspension of civil liberties (approved by a cowardly Parliament) during the Emergency. An active electorate shortly turned her out, and the Supreme Court built up more robust safeguards for judicial review of parliamentary action.

Together with the institutional structure, we should credit the vigor of democracy in India to a strong and independent press, whose critical independence and commitment to free investigation was another part of Nehru's ideal. As Brown stresses, democracy and federalism made the realization of other cherished goals slow and uncertain: changes in the status of women in particular, central in Nehru's vision of India's future, have moved at a snail's pace because of the dominance of entrenched traditional ideas. Still, Nehru's patience with democracy was right and Indira's impatience was wrong. His one great weakness in this area, indeed, was a weakness of impatience, connected to his desire to get a lot done: namely, his reluctance to mold Congress into a genuine political party, one among others. Since Congress was always, under Nehru, both a movement and a party, multi-party democracy has not altogether flourished. The only other nationally influential parties organized along simply political lines have been the (two) communist parties and a short-lived market-libertarian party that never caught on. Apart from these (and communist influence is large in two states only), political opposition to Congress has typically come from parties organized along lines of religion, region, and caste. The resulting balkanization of politics has entrenched divisions that Nehru rightly wished to undermine.

As for the economy, both Tharoor and Brown easily make the hindsight judgment that Nehru relied too much on centralized planning—though Brown at least gives him credit for the progress that India made in heavy industry and for impressive economic growth in the early years. The failure of planning, more than any other single factor, explains the low esteem in which many businesspeople hold Nehru and Congress today. But it should be remembered that Nehru was always an empiricist, committed to following the evidence where it led. It is hard for me to imagine that he would not ultimately have supported the economic reforms of Manmohan Singh.

Yet one should not confuse a commitment to reform with indifference to the plight of the poor, and many voters in the Samachar poll may have made that confusion. The BJP's recent electoral campaign, which used as its central slogan "India Shining," offended and angered

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rural voters, for whom India is not at all shining. Reaction against a cynical politics of globalization without protections for the vulnerable played a large part in ensuring the party's defeat, in favor of a Congress committed to both economic reform and a decent social safety net.

In foreign policy, both Brown and Tharoor seem uneasy with Nehru's policy of non-alignment during the Cold War, and they are correct, to the extent that Nehru's sympathy with socialism blinded him to some of the evils of Soviet rule, with particularly bad effect in 1956, when he refused to protest the Soviet invasion of Hungary. He also took a rosier picture of India-China relations than was plausible. Yet one should admire his courage in standing up to demands from both sides that India become a pawn in their power games. And his internationalism, in a world that had not yet come to terms with the ideal of global cooperation, offers a moving model for an era in which that ideal is once again being increasingly called into question.

Where religion is concerned, both Tharoor and Brown are rightly impressed with Nehru's vision of India as a tolerant pluralist nation, showing all citizens and all religions equal respect before the laws. They are also rightly convinced that Nehru made mistakes in this area because he took religion too lightly. Nehru thought that science was the way of thinking for the future; he found religion embarrassing and primitive, a "terrible burden" that India had to get rid of if it was to "breathe freely or do anything useful." Brown puts this down to his Western education, but this underestimates the depth of religion in the West and the depth of rationalism in Indian religious traditions. Nehru knew a lot about all this, so his hostility to religion and his often facile contrast of religion with science is not easy to explain.

What is clear, however, is that his feeling that religion was an embarrassment led him to devote much too little attention to the public molding of religion, so that it could become a grassroots force for pluralism and respect rather than for fear and hatred. The result has been that the Hindu right went to work basically unopposed, creating a masterful popular program of indoctrination that has spread the gospel of anti-Muslim fear to every region. Given his emphatic recognition that Hinduism historically is the most pluralistic and tolerant of religions—its "essential spirit," he said, is "live and let live"—why didn't Nehru follow Gandhi's lead, putting forward a public version of religion that showed a way forward toward the removal of barriers of caste and faith? Or, better yet, since Gandhi himself stressed that the Hindu nature of India is more than compatible with a truly respectful pluralism, why did he not follow the example of Tagore, who forged in Bengal a public poetry of syncretism and inclusion, creating dance dramas, stories, poems, and songs (one of which is sung now as India's national anthem) that celebrate the strength that derives from diversity, the vigor that grows out of a willingness to criticize entrenched habits and to respect differences?

THE MAJOR FACTOR BEHIND Nehru's failure to follow these examples, and create a public culture of equal respect that could hold people's emotions and hopes and fears, was, I believe, the influence of Marxism. Nehru greatly loved the people of India, but he writes about them oddly, using crude words such as "the mass" and "the masses." One minute he is writing about his own personal emotions with the greatest acuity; the next he treats "the mass" as a proletarian class that has no such personal emotions, but will somehow behave like a class, rising and flourishing as such. This was not elitism so much as a theoretical view of class that screened him from the reality of what people feel in their hearts. The Marxian idea that religion is an "opiate" impeding the proletariat from realizing its destiny is an idea that Nehru expresses repeatedly in his own words.

He failed to see, in short, what Tagore saw very clearly: that each human being of every caste, creed, and class is a separate person, with fear and longing and hope. If he had understood this, he would perhaps have understood, too, that the people of India, each and every one, need what he needed: poetry and music and mourning and love, in a religious or nonreligious form—and also a group of like-minded Indians with whom to share poetry and music and mourning and love. The Hindu right understands this very well.

And these limitations in Nehru's imagination of humanity explain also his other great failure: namely, the failure to create a system of public education that would provide robust underpinnings for a democratic political culture. India does splendidly in scientific and technological education, because that is what Nehru cared about and fostered. If the teaching of basic science and computer technology were as primitive as is the teaching of history and literature and critical thinking, it would be a public scandal. But, with all the arguments that rage about what account of history should figure in textbooks for seventeen-year-olds, one more rarely hears the complaint that seventeen-year-olds are learning history by rote from textbooks—that, indeed, virtually all their schooling takes the form of rote learning. Over the years basic literacy has spread, but access to really high-quality education is virtually restricted to elites who can attend private schools.

The dismal quality of rote learning in public schools (when the teachers even show up, which is not always) surely augurs badly for the future of Indian democracy. In fact, one reason why the rural poor are such thoughtful and active citizens is possibly that they often don't go to public schools. I have observed education in India for the rural poor, as conducted by NGOs that work with working children and adults, and that education is almost always imaginative, vigorous, animated by a sense of education as a humane mission connected with empowerment and citizenship. In the average public school classroom, there is not much idealism or imagination on offer. In some crucial respects, then, the middle class gets a worse education for citizenship than the rural poor. (Here again it was Tagore who showed the way, creating an educational vision, in his Santiniketan school and the related university, that focused on the activation of critical and imaginative capacities.)

For all his blind spots and his failings, however, Nehru's achievement was staggering: the creation of the largest democracy in the world. So far, this democracy has grappled with enormous tensions and unparalleled diversity without losing its basic commitments to pluralism and the rule of law. Where Nehru's vision has gaps and defects, he himself was the first to acknowledge that his task was both shared and ongoing. At the head of the epilogue to his autobiography he placed an epigraph from the Talmud: "We are enjoined to labor; but it is not granted to us to complete our labors." If blind greed, technocratic elitism, and religious bigotry do not derail the "labor," it may possibly be—not completed, for it never can be, but continued, by all of us, in this "one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments." ■

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Nathan Glazer
Out of Africa

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS AND THE RACIAL POLITICS OF KNOWLEDGE
By Jerry Gershenhorn
(University of Nebraska Press, 338 pp., $65)

MELVILLE J. HERSKOVITS is best known today for his book *The Myth of the Negro Past*, which appeared in 1941, and argued that one could find among American Negroes "survivals" or "retentions" of their original African background. It was generally assumed at the time that all African cultural characteristics had been burned away by the fire of slavery. And so Herskovits's thesis was controversial then, and it is controversial today, despite Jerry Gershenhorn's effort to assimilate it to more recent notions such as the "black power" of the 1960s and the "multiculturalism" of the 1990s. But Herskovits was certainly a major figure in his time, involved in significant controversies over the nature of American black identity in the prewar years and writing voluminously on Dahomey (now Benin) and various groups of diaspora blacks in the New World.

Herskovits was also the chief figure in establishing African studies as a legitimate field of scholarly inquiry in American universities in the postwar years. At Northwestern, which gave him his first regular academic post in 1927, and where he spent the rest of his career until his death in 1963, he created the first important center for African studies in the United States. He established the African Studies Association, and just a few months before his death he gave a plenary address at the First International Congress of Africanists in Ghana. One wonders whether a white (and Jewish) anthropologist could fill such a role today.

His scholarly career bridged two very different periods in the social sciences—an earlier era that we can scarcely envisage now, in which racist assumptions were dominant and respectable; and then the transformed academic world of today, in which black scholars dominate the study of American blacks and of Africa. One is plunged by this biography into a world that is fascinating and strange, in which there were very few Jewish scholars in American universities, in which it was assumed that anti-Semitism would block an academic career, and in which the fight against racism among scholars was a major task.

Herskovits was born in 1895 in a small town in Ohio, into a family of Central European Jewish immigrants. Gershenhorn calls them "assimilated," and notes that the family "celebrated both Jewish and Christian holidays." "The Jew has everywhere taken on the color of the culture in which he lives," Herskovits wrote in 1927, "and far from identifying himself with his own typical culture (whatever there may be of it), he usually tries to become as completely acculturated as possible to the culture in which he finds himself." The article in which this observation appeared had been turned down by the *Menorah Journal* (we learn this from an earlier account of Herskovits's life and accomplishments by Walter Jackson) and was published in V. F. Calverton's radical *Modern Quarterly*. But Herskovits had not been fully divorced from his Jewishness: he attended Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati for a while, with the thought of becoming a Reform rabbi.

In World War I he enlisted in the U.S. Army Medical Corps, then returned to the University of Chicago, and after graduation he moved to New York. He had become committed to the labor movement, to socialism, and to modernism in thought. In New York he attended the newly established and progressive New School, and then Columbia University, where he wrote a master's thesis in political science defending persecuted trade unionists. Gershenhorn offers no reasons why Herskovits then decided to become a student of Franz Boas, a dominant figure in American anthropology. Ruth Benedict had followed the same trajectory, from the New School to Boas's classes; Margaret Mead and A. Irving Hallowell were fellow students. Boas was perhaps the most influential anthropologist in the United States, and his students—A. L. Kroeber, Robert Lowie, Edward Sapir, Alexander Goldenweiser, Paul Radin, and many others—were fanning out, from Berkeley to Yale, to shape American anthropology. (I studied anthropology with Hallowell and linguistics with Zellig Harris, a student of Sapir's, so the Boas influence can be said to have descended also to me.)

IT WAS A GLORIOUS MOMENT FOR anthropology. Boas, educated as a mathematician and scientist in Germany, left his native country—some biographical accounts say it was because of anti-Semitism—and established himself, surprisingly, at Columbia. The cultures and the languages of the varied American Indian tribes were then rapidly disappearing, and Boas saw it as his task to record the knowledge of these cultures and languages before they were gone. He dispatched his students to live and to work among the surviving Indians, and he was in large measure responsible for shifting anthropology from a library study of travelers' and missionaries' reports to a methodical discipline based on direct experience of the lives of preliterate peoples. It was a time when money for this kind of research was scarce, when the only foundations that supported research were the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation, but Boas worked tirelessly to find research money for his students—much of it from a private patron, the anthropologist Elsie Clews Parsons—and to establish them academically. This was no easy task, since so many of his students were Jews and women (some both), and the American academy was not friendly to either. Despite all these difficulties, there was great work to be done in anthropology in the days before preliterate and non-Western societies had been drastically transformed by contact with Western expansion—political, military, economic, and cultural.

Another task to which Boas and his students were devoted was the fight against the racist orientations in the social sciences of the day, the ordering of races on the basis of their physical characteristics, and the assumption that this ordering, based on inherent and unchanging biological qualities, determined intelligence and culture. When Herskovits began to study with Boas, the restrictive legislation that banned Asian immigration and sharply reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe was coming into effect, and the Ku

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Klux Klan was a major force in American politics. Clark Wissler of the American Museum of Natural History, a major anthropologist of the time, and Robert Yerkes, the Yale psychologist who managed the Army's intelligence tests in World War I, were members of the eugenicist Galton Society, along with Madison Grant, author the racist best-seller *The Passing of a Great Race*. Wissler and Yerkes were also influential members of the Committee on Scientific Problems of Human Migrations of the National Research Council (established during the war to assist the government with scientific knowledge). This committee, Gershenhorn writes, was "formed in 1922 to finance anthropometric studies of race that would promote immigration restriction." It was this committee to which Boas had to look for research support for his students.

Racist interpretations in social science loomed particularly large because the huge database of intelligence tests of young men drafted for World War I showed a regular order from the favored "Nordics" at the top to blacks at the bottom, and this was taken as direct evidence that race determined intelligence. To counter the arguments for the racial inferiority of southern and eastern Europeans, Boas had earlier conducted a famous study of head shape (a principal measure at the time in differentiating what were considered different major races) in Italian immigrants and their children, and showed that this measure, assumed to be fixed biologically from generation to generation, changed from parents to children in the American environment. Gershenhorn reports that many years later another look at Boas's data revealed "observer discrepancies"; perhaps head shape did not change as much as Boas thought. But no matter: at the time, and for decades thereafter, this study was seen as a major setback for racist social science.

Boas, and Herskovits with him, believed that studies of the physical anthropology of the American Negro would undermine the racist assumption of Negro inferiority. They also believed that racist social scientists would support anthropometric studies. If that was where the money was, that was where they would go. Boas managed to secure financing for Herskovits for a three-year study of American blacks. In those distant days, before we knew anything about differentiating people by heredity using blood types, and before the discovery of DNA, physical measurement of body shape and skin color was the favored scientific approach to determining affiliation to a racial stock. Herskovits measured blacks in Harlem, at Howard University, and elsewhere. He used no fewer than thirty different measurements, which today read like high comedy ("nose height," "nose width," "nose depth," "distance from crease to tip of nose," and so on). More helpfully, he also recorded genealogies from his subjects. What the initial hypotheses to be tested by all these measurements were is not really clear from Gershenhorn's account, but Herskovits in the end concluded from his measurements and his genealogies that there was a great deal of mixture of white in the Negro population and a great deal of variation within the Negro population. He published his findings in *The American Negro: A Study in Racial Crossing* in 1928, and in a more technical account, *The Anthropometry of the Negro*, in 1930.

DID THIS UNDERMINE RACISM? Gershenhorn's efforts to explain how it did verge on incoherence: "If race was defined as a group with similar physical traits and if a group that was proven to be of mixed racial origin demonstrated physical homogeneity, then racial categories (defined in biological terms) were rendered meaningless." Or: "In the context of racist views of mulatto infertility or biological degeneracy ... Herskovits' characterization of African Americans as a distinct or homogenous population group or type represented an anti-racist position.... Herskovits' findings that most black Americans had a mixed racial heritage and constituted a stable physical type—one with low physical variability—refuted the racist position." Or again: "Any assumptions of racial inferiority would be undermined because generalizations about a group of people with diverse heritage would lack validity."

Well, it is not easy to think one's way back into the logic of the arguments of another era, a logic that may not be either attractive or plausible to a later age, and Gershenhorn is not very good at helping us do so. Otto Klineberg and Margaret Mead, for whom Boas got money at the same time from the same committee to study Negro intelligence and Samoan adolescents, had rather better projects. We can still understand and make sense of what they discovered, and why it could undermine racist assumptions of group inferiority. (As the Boas students spread out for their research assignments, Herskovits was unable to sublet his friend Margaret Mead's apartment in Manhattan because the landlord did not rent to Jews.) The publication of *The American Negro: A Study in Racial Crossing* did not convince racist social scientists that anything significant or substantive enough to undermine their position had been established. W. E. B. DuBois was extravagant in his praise, but Carter Woodson, the eminent black historian, attacked the use of anthropometry, or physical measurements, to distinguish the races. The very method, he contended, gave support to racism. "Differences in progress," he wrote, "[are] due to environment and opportunity." Boas and Herskovits would have agreed, but they had somewhat unthinkingly followed a traditional approach that could not at the time undermine racist assumptions, which was their principal objective. They could prove that no race was pure, but this did not overthrow racism.

WHY HERSKOVITS MOVED from this kind of work to the more fruitful study of the black diaspora in the New World and its origins in Africa, and how he developed an increasing conviction that African culture had in various ways shaped and been retained in American Negro life, is not clear from Gershenhorn's account. Gershenhorn places this next and major phase of Herskovits's career in the context of the prevalent debate about American identity, and how it was influenced by the huge immigrant waves that were coming to an end in the 1920s. The issue could be phrased in terms of the conflict between the desirability of assimilation or Americanization versus the maintenance of

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particularist group identity. This latter was given its most effective formulation by the philosopher Horace Kallen, who argued for "cultural pluralism" and the value of immigrant cultures, for the immigrants themselves and for American life. Herskovits knew Kallen at the New School. At the same time John Dewey and Jane Addams were also defending pluralism and distinctive immigrant culture; it was then a new and radical position to argue that these cultures could influence American culture to its benefit, just as American culture influenced the immigrant.

Where did the American Negro fall in this debate, and where did Herskovits stand? Initially, he stood at the assimilationist end; recall his comments on Jewishness. Africans had become assimilated, and he saw no reason why this was not a salutary development. In this view he was allied with prominent black intellectuals who asserted that the American Negro was an American, forged in America—that the American Negro was indeed *the* American, connected to no remembered or meaningful past in the Old World, as even the Americans of highest prestige, those of English origin, were. On the other hand, there were those who argued that a distinctive black culture had been created on these shores, that what had happened to blacks was very different from what had happened to immigrants and to the cultures that Kallen wished to preserve. It was true that blacks, in contrast to European and Asian immigrants, had no serious connection with Africa, their continent of origin; but in the harsh circumstances of American slavery, the anti-assimilationists believed, something new and different and valuable had been created.

There is a subtle and complex interplay between these concepts of assimilation and particularism. They come in both crude and sophisticated forms. There was Marcus Garvey's "back to Africa" movement; but there were also the sentiments of identity of the Harlem Renaissance. Gershenhorn writes that "Herskovits began to feel a dissonance between his assimilationism and the embrace of cultural pluralism by many of his intellectual friends, including the Harlem Renaissance writers." Alain Locke, the philosopher from Howard, was particularly influential here. James Weldon Johnson directed Herskovits's attention to a possible African influence on the songs of black Americans. A German musicologist named Erich von Hornbostel entered into a long correspondence with Herskovits on a connection between African and African American "motor behavior." Herskovits told Hornbostel about his assistant Zora Neale Hurston and her "distinctive speech, singing, and motor behavior."

So was there, after all, a memory of Africa incorporated in current African American culture and behavior? Herskovits decided he would have to study those black diaspora communities in the New World that could be presumed to be closer to Africa, and which might have retained more in the way of African influence than the black communities in the United States. Beginning in 1928, and using his summers and leaves from teaching at Northwestern, he and his wife Frances conducted research in Suriname among the "Maroons," black communities in the interior created by escaped slaves; in West Africa (the Gold Coast, Nigeria, and in particular Dahomey); in Haiti; in Trinidad; in Bahia, Brazil. Herskovits became America's leading white authority on Africa and on black diaspora communities.

In the 1930s the Carnegie Corporation began to consider a major research study on American Negroes. Herskovits was approached about conducting it, but he had a reputation for difficulty, and in the end the corporation chose the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal, who eventually produced the monumental *An American Dilemma*. Herskovits may have played a role in the decision to select Myrdal when he insisted to the Carnegie Corporation that the director of the study, if he was not to be an American, should come from a country without colonies. One aspect of this large study was to commission a number of initial monographs to guide Myrdal. Herskovits was commissioned to write one of these (and so was Ralph Bunche, a student of Herskovits). This provided the occasion for Herskovits to pull together his years of study of African diasporas in the New World and their presumed African homelands, and with great alacrity he wrote the book with which he would be most closely identified, *The Myth of the Negro Past*. Different as it was from his anthropometry-based *The American Negro*, it nonetheless leaves us with the same ambiguity about its possible impact on racism and racist thinking, and its value in improving the position of the American Negro in American thought and consciousness, which was one of Herskovits's principal objectives. Herskovits thought it helped. Others, including leading black intellectuals, were not so sure.

What did it profit the American Negro to be more closely identified with Africa? And what was Africa in the American mind? Herskovits knew that there had been large organized black states in Africa; that there were complex cultures there, and magnificent art, and fully developed religious orientations—but Americans in general did not know this, nor could they see the complexity and the richness of preliterate cultures in the manner of an anthropologist. Myrdal certainly was unconvinced. (He was quoted by Ralph Bunche as saying that "Mel Herskovits is rather crazy at present. He sees everything in the light of African inheritance.") Black scholars were divided. DuBois and Woodson praised Herskovits's effort. E. Franklin Frazier attacked it. Having recently published his magnum opus, *The Negro Family in the United States*, Frazier saw nothing of African survival or retention in the black American family. He also feared that the Africanist thesis would give support to black nationalists and white racists. For Frazier, as for many black scholars and intellectuals, Negroes wanted to be Americans, fully accepted as such, and nothing more.

And yet Herskovits's book remains in print more than sixty years after its publication. It presents an approach to black difference that Afrocentrists can seize upon, though the major thrust of multiculturalism is quite different. For multiculturalism generally, the black difference has been made in America, and it owes little to presumed African origins. In any event, Herskovits had been established as America's leading authority on black diasporas and on Africa. He was also, with less justification, considered a leading authority on American blacks, and involved in all the major projects to

Ulysses
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study American blacks. In one such project, to create an "Encyclopedia of the Negro," an enterprise close to DuBois's heart, Herskovits played a somewhat underhanded role in undermining it.

In the postwar world, with African colonies becoming independent, Herskovits's advice was regularly sought out by foundations, and he became something of a gatekeeper for research on Africa. Black scholars of today do not look kindly on a white man who was more influential with foundations and government than contemporary black scholars of equal or greater worth, and this part of Herskovits's story is fully laid out by Gershenhorn. Herskovits was a critic of colonialism, one who supported self-determination for the African colonies and argued against viewing American interest in these new states only from the point of view of the American stake in the Cold War. He died shortly after the explosion of independence for African colonies, and long before anyone could judge what the effect of independence would be for them.

GERSHENHORN HAS PRODUCED a full account of his fascinating subject, based on rich archival material, but his book is pedestrian in writing and conception. Walter Jackson's briefer study, which appeared in 1986, is in many respects preferable, especially about the intellectual context of the times. There is much in Herskovits's career that remains of great interest when one considers African American culture today. His search for African survivals and retentions had to be in the nature of the case speculative rather than determinative, but it led him to record in great detail the actual surviving cultures of diaspora communities and the African areas from which they had come, at a time when these realities were changing rapidly. One wonders if he could have envisaged before his death what Africa became to African Americans: a matter for recovery rather than retention. If we see African clothing, African elements in popular and classical music, African art themes, and holidays with African names among African Americans today, this is not because of any direct memory of or continuity with Africa, but because African Americans are creating a culture, and they wish to include African elements within it. This is an affair of choice, not of authenticity.

One is led to think again of the whole Boasian project and its fate. Having recorded Indian languages as spoken by their last native speakers, American anthropologists were astonished to discover in recent decades that their work had become the texts for American Indians who wanted to recover their lost languages and customs. The record preserved by anthropologists permitted them to recover, to some degree, custom and language. Cultures are not only inherited; they are also constructed. Even when we do not directly receive the beliefs and the practices of our ancestors, we may elect to recover them and even to practice them. ■

Jaroslaw Anders

Dead Souls

MONUMENTAL PROPAGANDA
By Vladimir Voinovich
Translated by Andrew Bromfield
(Alfred A. Knopf, 365 pp., $25)

IN 1999, IN THE SIBERIAN TOWN of Ishin, some 1,250 miles southeast of Moscow, a three-foot-tall bust of Stalin was discovered buried in a local garden. Apparently, it was hidden there by an anonymous idolater at the time of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization campaign. For years the tyrant's name was unmentionable, and his effigies were scrupulously removed from public view. Under Brezhnev, he enjoyed a partial comeback as the nation's great war leader, but it was only in the new and supposedly free post-communist Russia that Stalin's likeness could be displayed once more. In Ishin, the local "Committee to Study Stalinist Heritage," led by a feisty pensioner named Tamara Sazhina, had the miraculously recovered bust mounted in a city square as part of a monument to the heroes of World War II.

This true story illustrates a phenomenon that the Russian commentator Eugenie Ikhlov calls *Stalinshchina*, "Stalin fashion" or "Stalin nostalgia." It can be seen in the growing popularity of Stalin memorabilia and repeated calls to restore Stalin's name to various monuments and public facilities. Groups of World War II veterans have been demanding for some time that the city of Volgograd restore its wartime name of Stalingrad. That has not happened yet, but the appellation was recently placed on a plaque in the Kremlin commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of what was possibly the bloodiest battle in the history of humanity.

According to an opinion poll conducted in 2003, fifty years after Stalin's death, 53 percent of Russians think positively of his historical role. Only 33 percent condemn him. For many his name became a synonym of all the things supposedly missing in today's Russian life: public order, decent living standards, a sense of national solidarity, collective dignity and strength. Even Russian youngsters point out that it was under Stalin that their country achieved superpower status "on a par with America."

What it all means is another matter. Ikhlov cautions that *Stalinshchina* should not be confused with true Stalinism, which also exists in today's Russia, but luckily at the far political margins. Stalinism, he says, is an ideology that preaches collectivism and ruthless discipline as the only way that Russians can achieve great historical goals. *Stalinshchina*, on the other hand, is a mythology. It is the absurd, anachronistic, corny cult of an enlightened and egalitarian absolute leader—not the real, historical Stalin, but a Stalin-like manifestation of a figure from Russian fairy tales, a "people's czar" who comes to humble the parasitical privileged classes. In this sense, say some Russian observers, the apotheosis of a brutal strongman is the flip side of the Russian distrust of all hierarchies. Daily humiliations at the hands of arrogant bureaucrats and the new rich make the common Russian long for someone before whom even the mightiest tremble. This dream of universal mortification may explain the surprisingly mild reaction to Vladimir Putin's increasingly authoritarian rule and the

Jaroslaw Anders's study of modern Polish literature will be published by Yale University Press.

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inimitable public delight at his rough handling of obnoxious oligarchs.

VLADIMIR VOINOVICH'S NEW novel reads at times like a clinical study of the *Stalinshchina* infection. Its main plot, in fact, is almost identical to the events in Ishin, though in the novel the Stalin likeness is no mere bust but a huge cast-iron monstrosity dominating the city square in the town of Dolgov, a stagnant, muddy epitome of the Russian provinces. It was erected in 1949, on the occasion of Stalin's seventieth birthday, through the relentless ministrations of Aglaya Stepanovna Revkina, a local party leader and former anti-Nazi partisan. The unveiling is accompanied by portentous events and induces in some participants a kind of religious psychosis. The monument's creator, a pitiful hack of an artist, almost collapses in rapture. Others sense that the figure radiates "a mysterious power" and evokes "inexplicable fear" that makes them recall their real and imagined trespasses "against their wives, their motherland, their Party and Comrade Stalin in Person." And Aglaya Stepanovna quietly falls in love with the iron monument.

After Khrushchev's denouncement of "the cult of the individual," when the party hastily begins to return to its "Leninist roots," Aglaya for the first time in her life refuses to toe the line. Brought up in absolute obedience, she becomes recalcitrant and rebellious. She refuses to renounce her idol and is dismissed from her job and from the party. When she learns that the statue is on its way to the junkyard, she has it moved into her own apartment, where she intends to preserve it until the eventual—and, in her view, inevitable—rehabilitation of her leader and of herself. In the meantime she spends her days trying to memorize, with scant effect, Stalin's opus, *The Foundations of Leninism*.

Aglaya's infatuation with Stalin, or rather with his effigy, has little to do with ideology or politics. She is too primitive to ponder the issues of freedom, authority, collectivity, and individuality. Her approach to Stalin is basically metaphysical, and as with many mystics it has a strong libidinous component. Most of all, she believes that "her" Stalin will somehow save her from her misery, redeem her meaningless life, lift the burden of her memory, and cure her perpetual sense of frustration. Aglaya also believes that all the higher ideas she was taught to venerate, and for which she made heroic sacrifices, somehow lose their sacred purity if people are allowed to think about and talk about them freely. Freedom—or, as classical liberals would say, negative freedom, with nobody telling people what they are actually free for—is for the heroine of Voinovich's wicked novel an absurd and dangerous proposition.

Needless to say, the life that unfolds around her in post-Stalinist Russia proves her absolutely right. As soon as Stalin's statue is pulled down, the city of Dolgov begins to sink into chaos and degradation. Stupidity and vice take the place of fear and discipline. "Beginning in the fall of 1961," says the narrator of the novel, "many inhabitants of Dolgov—or more precisely all of them—began to get the feeling that some irreparable dislocation had occurred in the life of the town and the district. When they removed the monument, it was like taking the axle out of a wheel." Children defy their parents, the consumption of alcohol increases, and there is an unusual epidemic of crime and sexual deviancy, while the comical "Baldie"—that is, Khrushchev—bustles about trying to turn the country into one huge field of corn. So freedom, even in small, controlled doses, obviously does not do anybody much good. And the post-Stalinist "liberalization" proves only a prelude for the real pandemonium of greed, violence, and indescribable vulgarity that follows the fall of communism in 1991.

ONE OF VOINOVICH'S MORE interesting conceits is to make Aglaya—the unpleasant, narrow-minded, and vicious former apparatchik—the only character in his book who is endowed with a semblance of integrity and dignity. All the rest lack even rudimentary convictions and any goals beyond simple survival and going along to get along. When loud applause follows the denunciations of Stalin's "errors and distortions," Aglaya is quite sincerely perplexed: "Did they really not believe what they were saying? Were they all really lying?" she asks. "I don't understand—when were these people being sincere, now or then?"

Those who believe that they live for higher goals are not much better. Aglaya's neighbor and frequent antagonist Mark Semyonovich Shubkin is a seemingly decent fellow, a polymath and an ardent though talentless poet who under Stalin spent some time felling trees in the Gulag for unspecified ideological trespasses. After his release he is offered a job as a schoolteacher and occupies himself writing letters to newspapers declaring his absolute devotion to "Leninist humanism." After *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* is unexpectedly published in the official Soviet press, he decides to join what he sees as a coming literary wave and write his own "camp story." But without his consent someone publishes his work in the West, which makes the hapless Shubkin the town's only certified "dissident." Even among the outcasts, however, he seems to be always in the swim, always following the latest oppositional fashion. The fervent Leninist turns democratic socialist, then Orthodox Christian, and finally he becomes a pious Jew. His changing political costumes are matched by changing portraits of his heroes on the walls of his apartment, and the constantly rewritten ending of his camp story.

The rest of the citizens of Dolgov consist of the familiar array of drunks, nuts, petty thieves, and nasty autocrats that inhabit almost every Russian satire since Gogol. The only character whom Voinovich seems to treat with some respect is another former Gulag inmate, a linguist and literary critic named Alexei Mikhailovich Makarov, known as the Admiral. (He is obsessed with the sea, which he has never seen.) He spends his preretirement years as a night watchman in a lumberyard, and whenever the story needs something like an authorial commentary, he obliges with an invariably pessimistic view of Russia, the world, and the human condition in general.

But it is the monument that is the main character of *Monumental Propaganda*. Its awkward size, its crushing weight, its total uselessness, and the fascination that it evokes in friends and enemies alike—all this provides a narrative anchor for many seemingly disjoined incidents. The monster simply refuses to go until a decision is made to restore it to its old pedestal in a solemn ceremony officiated by the new "democratic" leaders of Dolgov and blessed by an Orthodox priest. But the re-dedication of the monument is prevented by an apocalyptic event that destroys both Aglaya and the monument.

Voinovich's novel is always engaging and often hilarious. He creates his grotesque, distorted world inhabited by grotesque, distorted people with consid-

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erable skill. He clearly possesses the Gogolian gift of finding the commonplace in the uncanny and the uncanny in the commonplace. Like many masters of the Russian grotesque, he can create characters that are simultaneously repulsive, pitiful, and strangely appealing. Aglaya's wasting away in alcoholism and madness is as funny as it is heartbreaking, even if it is deserved. Shubkin, with his delusions of greatness, evokes more sympathy than derision. Voinovich has a flair for an easily forgotten aspect of life under communism: its absolute idiocy that left normal, educated adults on both sides of the political divide eagerly trading in clichés and communicating in a crude and juvenile language.

Monumental Propaganda shows how unreal and threatening "liberty" can look through the eyes of people conditioned to living in dull, predictable slavery. It reminds us that "positive" freedom, creative freedom, is a matter of culture rather than politics—it can be exercised only in a pre-existing framework of internalized norms, traditions, and social expectations. But what if this intricate scaffolding, which is the grammar of liberty, is weakened, warped, or missing altogether? This question should probably lead to other, more specific questions. Why have the Eastern European liberal elites—seemingly so honest, brave, and highly respected—proved so pitifully ineffective on the political stage? Why were the apparently strong cultural traditions that helped the enslaved people survive the worst of times so easily replaced by the most vulgar forms of consumerist selfishness? What is the answer to Eric Hoffer's famous dictum that "when freedom destroys order, a society's need for order will destroy freedom"?

There is no reason why those questions should not be explored in an Eastern European novel. But Voinovich is not really interested in critical explorations of the new reality of the post-communist world. He is in it for some laughs, and for easy drama; and so he retreats to historical fatalism of a familiar, anti-liberal scent.

Of all people, it is the novel's sage and former dissident, the saintly Admiral, who delivers the lines that seem to justify Aglaya's passionate contempt for liberty and validate the cynicism of the novel's other characters. In his opinion, the fall of communism was nothing more than the decentralization of terror and the privatization of violence. Once the monopoly of power is broken, "anybody at all can sentence anybody else at all to death for anything at all." Freedom works only for the strong and ruthless. "And now that we've seen this freedom and experienced this fear, we're wondering if it might be better to go back to our cages and put the predators back in theirs as well. They'll still feed them on us, but in regulated amounts." The utopia of absolute social justice, of "happiness for all," has been discredited, but only temporarily: it will be back, because "individual human beings, when gathered together, are transformed into the people. And the people is a naïve creature, willing to be deceived a thousand times over and then believe again for the thousand and first time." So everything that Sakharov and Havel and Milosz and the others told us was bunk. Liberty, democracy, individual rights, self-responsibility, freedom of expression—all this was just stage decoration, a disguise for a new social Darwinism.

Apart from Aglaya, Shubkin, and the Admiral, Voinovich introduces one more character whom it is possible to see as the representative of yet another side of contemporary Russia, or maybe the contemporary world. Vanka Zhukov is a scientific genius and a printer of underground dissident literature. Betrayed by his best friend, he is arrested and, instead of prison, sent to Afghanistan. He returns a horribly mangled human wreck, and immediately he puts his scientific talents at the service of the business and mafia clans as a highly regarded and very expensive bomb maker. He prides himself on the fact that his devices never harm anybody they are not meant to harm, but there is little doubt that his laboratory in the basement of Aglaya's tenement house is a bunker in his private war against the world. (He maintains an intimate e-mail correspondence with his American Unabomber–like equivalent.)

It is Vanya's lab that provides the apocalyptic conclusion of the story, while granting Aglaya her most intimate wish at the moment of her death. But the author leaves no doubt about what will eventually rise out of the rubble. As the narrator, who researched these events for his book, leaves the town of Dolgov, he casts a parting glance at the empty space in the center of the park. "And then, above the pedestal, fashioned out of foggy vapor and my no-doubt-fevered imagination, a figure took shape. Something human in form. It watched me as I drove away, grinning and waving with its raised right hand."

What is troubling about this clichéd apocalypse is not so much the fact that we have read it all before, but that we seem to be reading more and more of it in, of all places, the literature of the former Soviet empire. Catastrophism seems to be the rage of the allegedly liberal day. Visions of moral decline and social breakdown turn up in all possible variations: comic, melancholy, fantastic, postmodern, realistic, gruesomely violent, pornographic. This kind of literature seems to relish the agony of a dream, the final days of the experiment with freedom.

The Cassandric incantations and apocalyptic visions in so much of today's Eastern European literature are presented by their creators as examples of critical thinking, but in truth they contribute to the lack of serious reflection that they bemoan. They smack of self-fulfilling prophecy. They certainly attract attention, and deliver a dramatic punch, and can be quite amusing, while requiring less effort and less knowledge than a more rigorous and compassionate investigation of what Lionel Trilling famously called the "variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty" of the world. Of course literature may permit itself moments of relaxation and irresponsibility, and we must not overestimate its power to shape reality; but literature is also a part of reality. The private mind of the writer becomes part of the public mind of the society. Literature can show, perhaps better than any other form of discourse, that the disorderly world of freedom is not necessarily doomed, that even the disharmonious can carry its own beauty and promise.

What is wrong with the post-communist vogue in apocalypse is its laziness, its unwillingness to be exigent and accountable. It is often witty and imaginative, but it is never really smart. Finally it is a coarse and shallow treatment of a coarse and shallow reality. Reality, especially the still-fluid reality of the new Eastern Europe, deserves better. It is too early to excuse oneself from what one of Trilling's teachers called "the moral obligation to be intelligent." It is not over yet. ■

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CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Body of Evidence

THERE ARE MANY ICONIC photographs of Marie Curie: Early on with her husband, Pierre, with whom she shared the first of her Nobel Prizes; and, after his death, standing alone with her instruments in the lab. But there are other, more telling, images as well: With her peers—among them Michelson, Rutherford, Millikan, Poincaré, Kapitza, Pauli, Bohr, Fermi, and, of course, Einstein—always the lone woman. In a 1911 photograph, she is surrounded by 23 men at the Solvay physics conference in Brussels. In a photograph at Lausanne, she sits, front-row, dead center, between Einstein and Fermi in a constellation of perhaps 80 or 90 men. This was the real, very sexist, world of physics, as explained in *Madame Curie*, the biography written by her daughter, who also happens to be my mother-in-law, Eve Curie (still sharp of mind and agile in body although, last December, we celebrated the centenary of her birth).

IN 1911, MARIE CURIE WAS DENIED membership in the French Academy of Sciences—which *l'Action française*, a clerical paper, called "the defeat of [Alfred] Dreyfus." Her opponents were traumatized that a foreigner, a Pole no less, might be admitted. But this obscured the real prejudice: No woman had entered the sanctum of the *Academie des sciences*. Those were the stakes.

MADAME CURIE CAME TO THE UNITED States ten years later. The president of Harvard compared her to Isaac Newton but did not award her an honorary degree because the physics department opposed it. Yale's leading physicist, Bertram Boltwood, who had applauded the university's decision not to bestow an honorary doctorate on Albert Einstein because he was "over here ... as a Zionist," also opposed one for Curie. Nonetheless, her national tour was such a success that *The New York Times* fretted it would provoke too many women to enter science: "[M]ore of men than women ... have the power—a necessary qualification for any real achievements in science—of viewing facts abstractly rather than relationally, without overestimating them because they harmonize with previously accepted theories."

CURIE'S CASKET JOINED HER HUSBAND'S in the cemetery at Sceaux on July 6, 1934, and they stayed together undisturbed until 1994, when François Mitterrand decided her remains should be transferred to the Pantheon, where not a single woman lay. What a vivid symbol with which both to break France's sexist image and to join in another one of the U.N.'s periodic jamborees, the International Year of the Woman. Mitterrand contacted my mother-in-law, not a woman to be rushed, nor easily persuaded against her honed convictions. Eve asked whether the president intended that her father's bones also be moved. Maybe Mitterrand hadn't contemplated the query. But Eve took the fumbling as a "no," a reverse piece of sexism, although she did not name it as such. And so, she did not give her consent. The next year, the president asked again, this time making clear that he envisioned the reburial as a ceremony for husband and wife. The president of France had his ceremony. And tens of thousands passed by the coffins as Pierre and Marie Curie lay in state in the Pantheon.

I'VE BEEN THINKING OF MADAME CURIE ever since Harvard President Lawrence Summers stirred a commotion with his remarks about women in the sciences. It has been 45 years since I came to Harvard as a graduate student and 39 years since I joined the faculty. At that time, there was just one female tenured full professor, Cecelia Payne-Gaposchkin, an astronomer who filled the singular Radcliffe chair designated for a woman. An important political theorist (whom I didn't like and who didn't like me), Judith Shklar, had to content herself with the title of "lecturer" until quite late in her career. My friend Agnes Mongan, who had probably taught more museum curators than anyone else in the United States, served as *acting* director of the Fogg for years, an incomprehensible indignity. No one can deny that Harvard has changed, and not only in regard to gender. (When I arrived, more than 10 percent of the freshman class came from Exeter and Andover, with another large cohort from the St. Grottlesex schools nationwide. Today, more than 25 percent come from homes where English is a second language.) Summers doesn't want to stop that change, he wants to accelerate it: In fact, his current obsession is the inability of growing swaths of the population to afford higher education's mounting costs, a very worthy obsession indeed.

NO ONE SERIOUS HAS CALLED SUMMERS a sexist. (Not even Nancy Hopkins, a professor of biology at MIT, who said that, if she hadn't walked out, she would have fainted or barfed.) Which is appropriate, since sexism had nothing to do with his controversial statements. What led him to wonder whether there might be small genetic variations between men and women in quantitative capacity, I suspect, was his genuine surprise that women have not risen in the fields of physics, engineering, and mathematics as fast as he thinks they could and should. He isn't in the least bit oblivious to the lingering prejudices against women in the academy. (After all, his mother is a retired professor of public policy at the Wharton School of Business and his "significant other," Elisa New, is a professor of English at Harvard and a valued contributor to THE NEW REPUBLIC.)

SUMMERS'S "PROBLEM" IS THAT HE submits every argument with a grain of evidence behind it to serious and scrupulous scrutiny. And this scares our supposedly daring academic culture, which lives in fear of what it refuses to know. As yet another of Curie's biographers suggested, "She had survived because she had made men believe that they were not just dealing with an equal, but with an insensitive equal." Summers knows that the age of such painful self-denial is gone, and good riddance. Still, the academy is the academy; it is not a community center. Students ought to know more than they do, and it is on Summers's agenda that they will. No American university has yet truly grasped how the revelations of science touch on history and art, philosophy and poetry, and it is on Summers's agenda that at least Harvard will try. In all this, he imperils the unexamined orthodoxies of the ensconced. And now, his enemies see a chance to counterattack. Let's hope they fail and he succeeds.

MARTIN PERETZ

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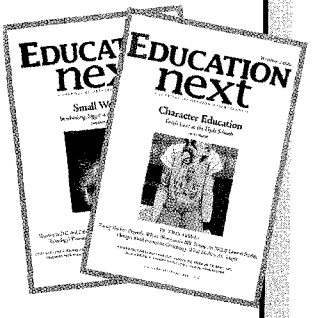
School Performance Matters

EDUCATION NEXT
A JOURNAL OF OPINION AND RESEARCH



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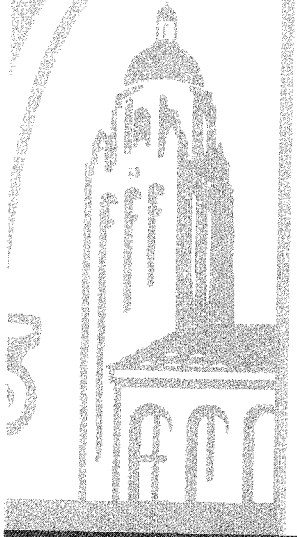

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

In recent weeks, two separate reports on international student performance were released. **The performance of students in the United States has remained consistent over the past three decades—dismal.** On the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) mathematics tests, U.S. fifteen-year-olds tied for twenty-seventh out of thirty-nine, outscoring students of such systems as Turkey, Mexico, and Tunisia. In 1995, on the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), U.S. students ranked in the top half of the distribution, which included more developing countries, but showed mixed performance gains compared to other nations taking the tests.

The usual response in the United States to announcements of such international results is to ignore them. After that, it is convenient just to explain them away: other countries test a more selective group of students, or the tests do not match our normal curriculum. Neither story is convincing, but with the general indifference to the results they do not have to be.

These results, however, should be taken very seriously. Research demonstrates that the skills measured on these tests are important in the labor market and have a substantial effect on national growth rates. Existing evidence indicates that the scores' importance to national growth is hard to overstate.

If the performance of U.S. students were to reach the middle of that of European students (still noticeably below the top), according to historical data, the U.S. economy could realize a half of 1 percent boost in its annual growth rate. Half of 1 percent sounds like a small difference, but it is in fact a very large number. The United States currently has a GDP per capita of $38,000. A half percent of additional annual growth would lift this by $2,000 per person after just ten years. In fact, the United States has achieved its economic position by outstripping the rest of the world in growth over the twentieth century.

Of course, improving our schools takes time, as does observing the impact on the economy. If we improved our student performance over the next few years, it would have no immediately discernible affect. Students are not yet in the labor force, and it takes some time before the new, higher-skilled students become a substantial part of the nation's workers. But if the improvements sketched above could be achieved within twenty years, the growth dividend could cover *all* of our national K–12 expenditures by 2040.

Other nations, taking the results of international assessments seriously, have used their poor performance as a lever to bring about changes in their schools. **It is time for us to take our poor performance seriously.** Lots of things have been done to change schools over the past two decades, but they have not led to much overall improvement, which reinforces the idea that maintaining the current structure and simply doing more of it is unlikely to yield results. Instead, "radical" ideas such as results-driven accountability, expanded school choice, and stronger rewards for schools that improve on their performance are obvious ways to turn.

—Eric A. Hanushek

Eric A. Hanushek is the Paul and Jean Hanna Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and a member of Hoover's Koret Task Force on K–12 Education.

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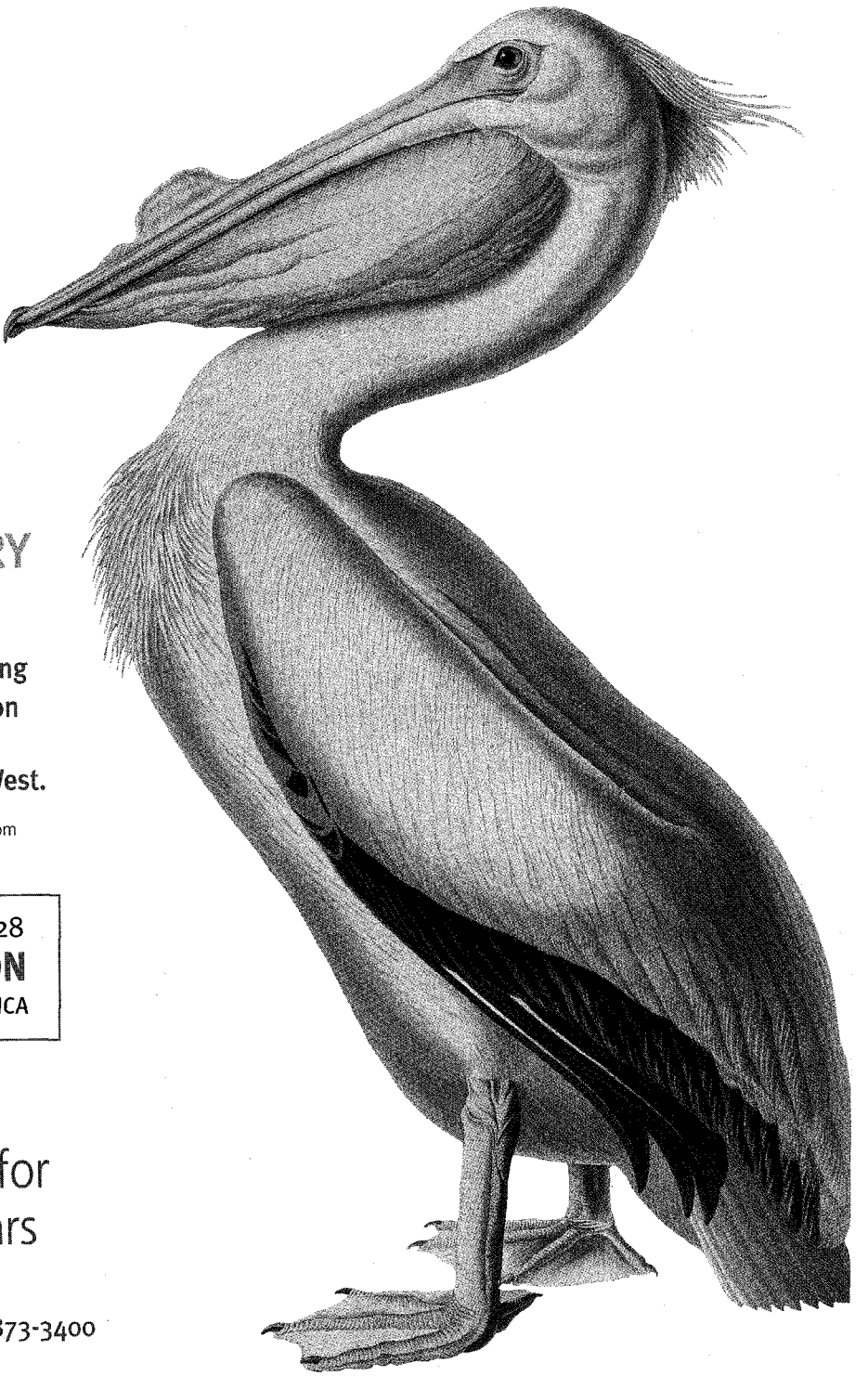
LOOK WHO'S NESTING ALONG CENTRAL PARK NOW



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